

"THE FAITH BOOK"

Sraddha - Fixing the Heart on the Truth

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"The Faith Book" was written as a reader or a course-manual for a seminar on faith. Therefore it's not really a book, but rather a reference manual. The manual is divided in to 5 sections and then followed by a dozen appendixes. The first section deals with definitions and so on, just to provide a frame of reference. You may just want to brush over it and not read it in depth. In the seminar we are not paying too much attention to this section. We focus especially on the second, third and fourth section; "Personal Conviction", "Faith in the context of ISKCON" and "Dialogue". The fifth section was offering some topics for essays for the students participating in the course.

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Introduction

This publication is an initial coverage of a subject matter that deserves more. It is meant to serve as a textbook for a course to be held during December 2002 in the VAISHNAVA THEOLOGY COLLEGE at Radhadesh, or we hope that it may also be found useful as a tool for others interested in learning about or presenting Krishna consciousness.

With the topic of *faith* we are going to the very roots of existence, because before engaging in any given action, there must be a ‘driving factor’ which makes us desire to do it. This all depends on *faith* in whatever we believe will make us happy. Therefore faith is a universal commodity found in every individual even in a skeptic, who has faith in his skepticism.

From the social perspective the word *faith* is taken to mean a particular type of “*Belief*”; a religion, a doctrine or a conviction which is shared by a group of people, who derive a certain status from their belief and usually have a whole culture to express it. People may buy into one-and-other’s ideas or develop a missionary spirit and in that framework may sometimes become artificial, overzealous or fanatic towards others or just themselves or both. One may adhere to ideas of how to live or think translating into disciplines; all of which remain theoretical because one does not actually have the experience of practical application and may therefore ignore basic realities of human nature. We can investigate to what extent we are affected by such a phenomenon.

We hope that both practicing Vaiṣṇava readers and others, who are reading it as an introduction to Krishna consciousness may find some value in this handbook, in their personal search for authenticity and the sublime, in developing a positive attitude towards ISKCON and yet allowing for criticism, and in the dialogue with people of various beliefs.

This handbook offers various sections:

1. “Defining the subject matter”

2. “Personal Conviction” from various angles
3. “Faith in the context of ISKCON”—dealing with serious, dignified, substantial spiritual themes and the wild growth of a new movement.
4. “Communication”—relating our views to views of the world and vice versa.
5. Guidelines for students to write essays, which I would like to publish after the course as a supplement.
6. Appendixes with many relevant articles or bits of information, from various authors and sources.

This presentation is yet in a crude state, so kindly overlook the imperfections in its appearance; we hope that nonetheless it may of some use in strengthening our faith.

— *Kadamba Kanana Swami*

Section One:

Faith—A General Analysis

DEFINITIONS

We will include both various dictionary meanings of the word ‘faith’, as well as of the Sanskrit word ‘śraddhā’.

A. DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS OF ‘FAITH’

I. Unabridged Oxford English Dictionary

The L. *fides*, like its etymological cognate Gr., which it renders in the N.T., had the following principal senses: 1. Belief, trust. 2. That which produces belief, evidence, token, pledge, engagement. 3. Trust in its objective aspect, troth; observance of trust, fidelity.]

I. Belief, trust, confidence. **1. a.** Confidence, reliance, trust (in the ability, goodness, etc., of a person; in the efficacy or worth of a thing; or in the truth of a statement or doctrine). Const. *in, of*. In early use, only with reference to religious objects; this is still the prevalent application, and often colours the wider use. **b.** Belief proceeding from reliance on testimony or authority. **2.** Phrases. **to give faith**: to yield belief *to*. **to pin one's faith to** or **upon**: to believe implicitly. **3. Theol.** in various specific applications. **a.** Belief in the truths of religion; belief in the authenticity of divine revelation (whether viewed as contained in Holy Scripture or in the teaching of the Church), and acceptance of the revealed doctrines. **b.** That kind of faith (distinctively called **saving** or **justifying faith**) by which, in the teaching of the N.T., a sinner is justified in the sight of God. This is very variously defined by theologians (see quotes.), but there is general agreement in regarding it as a conviction practically operative on the character and will, and thus opposed to the mere intellectual assent to religious truth (sometimes called **speculative faith**). **c.** The spiritual apprehension of divine truths, or of realities beyond the reach of sensible experience or logical proof. By Christian writers often identified with the preceding; but not exclusively confined to Christian use. Often viewed as the exercise of a special faculty in the soul of man, or as the result of supernatural illumination. **4.** That which is or should be believed. **a.** A system of religious belief, e.g. *the Christian, Jewish, Muslim*, etc., *faith*. Also, *confession, rule of faith*, for which see those words. **b. the faith**: the true religion; usually = the Christian faith. Also, without article in certain

phrases, as **contrary to faith**, etc. **of faith**: part and parcel of the faith. **c.** What is believed, or required to be believed, on a particular subject. Also *pl.* points of faith, tenets. **5. act of (the) faith**: = *auto da fé*. *Obs.*

II. Inducement to belief or trust. **6.** Power to produce belief, credit, convincing authority. *Obs.* **7.** Attestation, confirmation, assurance. *Obs.* **8. a.** Assurance given, formal declaration, pledge, promise. In phrases, **to do, make faith** (= L. *fidem facere*): to affirm, promise, give surety. **to give (one's) faith** (= L. *fidem dare*): to give assurance, pledge one's word. **on his faith**: on parole. *Obs.* **b. on the faith of**: in reliance on the security of.

III. The obligation imposed by a trust. **9. a.** The duty of fulfilling one's trust; allegiance owed to a superior, fealty; the obligation of a promise or engagement. **b.** In many phrases, in which the sense approaches that of 8: *to engage, pledge, plight (one's) faith; to swear, perjure one's faith; to keep (hold), break, violate (one's) faith; so breach of faith.* **10.** The quality of fulfilling one's trust; faithfulness, fidelity, loyalty. **to bear faith**: to be loyal *to*. **11. good faith, bad faith**: = L. *bona, mala fides*, in which the primary notion seems to have been the objective aspect of confidence well or ill bestowed. The Eng. uses closely follow those of L. **a. good faith**: fidelity, loyalty (= sense 10); *esp.* honesty of intention in entering into engagements, sincerity in professions, *bona fides*. **b. bad faith**: faithlessness, treachery; intent to deceive. **Punic (rarely Carthaginian) faith** (= L. *fides Punica*): faithlessness. **12.** In asseverative phrases. **a. in (good) faith**: in truth, really, 'sooth to say'. **b. in faith, i' faith, faith, good faith**: used interjectionally. **c.** In quasi-oaths. **by** or **on my, thy**, etc., **faith, by the faith of (my body, love, etc.)**. **my faith** (= Fr. *ma foi!*). **13.** An alleged designation for a company of merchants.

IV. 14. Comb. Chiefly objective, as **faith-breach, -breaker, -philosophy, -state, -stretcher, -value, faith-definition, -reformation, -tradition, faith-breaking, -keeping** n. and adj.; **faith-confirming, -infringing, -shaking, -sown, -starved, -straining, -workful** adjs.; **faith-wise** adv.; **faith-cure**, a cure wrought by means of 'the prayer of faith' (*Jas.* v. 15); whence **faith-curer, -curist**, one who believes in or practises faith-cure; **faith-fire**, *fig.* the flame of faith; **faith-healer** = *faith-curer*; **faith-healing**, healing by faith-cure; **faith-ladder** (see quot. *a1910*); **faith-mark**, one of the leading tenets of religion; **faith-press**, the Inquisition.

II. The Harper Collins Dictionary of Philosophy, 2nd edition

Faith -, (from Latin, *fides*, faith, trust, loyalty) **1.** acceptance of a system of beliefs believed to be true. **2.** belief in the creeds of a religion. **3.** steadfast belief and trust in God (usually one who has revealed Himself and can be known). **4.** belief in something despite the evidence against it. **5.** belief in something even though there is an absence of evidence for it. **6.** belief in something because of past evidence for it; confidence based on reliability. **7.** trust in the truth of something that can not be rationally or empirically supported but which is presupposed by some form of empirical knowledge.

III. Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary

1. confidence or trust in a person or thing: faith in another's ability. 2. belief that is not based on proof: He had faith that the hypothesis would be substantiated by fact. 3. belief in God or in the doctrines or teachings of religion: the firm faith of the Pilgrims. 4. belief in anything, as a code of ethics, standards of merit, etc.: to be of the same faith with someone concerning honesty. 5. a system of religious belief: the Christian faith; the Jewish faith. 6. the obligation of loyalty or fidelity to a person, promise, engagement, etc.: Failure to appear would be breaking faith. 7. the observance of this obligation; fidelity to one's promise, oath, allegiance, etc.: He was the only one who proved his faith during our recent troubles. 8. Christian Theol. the trust in God and in His promises as made through Christ and the Scriptures by which humans are justified or saved. 9. in faith, in truth; indeed: In faith, he is a fine lad. ETYMOLOGY: [1200-50; ME feith < AF fed, OF feid, feit < L. fidem, acc. of fides trust, akin to fidere to trust. See CONFIDE]

IV. American Heritage Dictionary

faith n. 1. Confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, an idea, or a thing. Belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence. See Synonyms at belief. See Synonyms at trust. 3. Loyalty to a person or thing; allegiance: keeping faith with one's supporters. 4. Often Faith. Theology: The theological virtue defined as secure belief in God and a trusting acceptance of God's will. 5. The body of dogma of a religion: the Moslem faith. 6. A set of principles or beliefs. —idiom. in faith. Indeed; truly. [Middle English, from Anglo-Norman fed, from Latin fids. See bheidh à bheidh-. Important derivatives are: bide, abide, fiancī, affidavit, confide, confident, defy, federal, faith, fidelity, infidel. bheidh-. To trust, confide, persuade. 1. BIDE; ABIDE, (ABODE), from Old English b^odan, to wait, stay, from Germanic *b^odan, to await (< “to await trustingly, expect, trust”), probably from bheidh-. 2. FIANCī, FIDUCIAL, (FIDUCIARY); AFFIANCE, (AFFIANT), (AFFIDAVIT), (CONFIDANT), CONFIDE, (CONFIDENT), (DEFIANCE), DEFY, DIFFIDENT, from Latin f^odere, to trust, confide, and f^odus, faithful. 3. Suffixed o-grade form *bhoidh-es-. FEDERAL, FEDERATE; CONFEDERATE, from Latin foedus (stem foeder-), treaty, league. 4. Zero-grade form *bhidh-. FAITH, FEALTY, FIDELITY; INFIDEL, PERFIDY, from Latin fids, faith, trust. [Pokorny bheidh- 117.]

V. Roget's II: The New Thesaurus, Third Edition

NOUN: 1. Mental acceptance of the truth or actuality of something: belief, credence, credit. See OPINION. 2. Absolute certainty in the trustworthiness of another: belief, confidence, dependence, reliance, trust. See BELIEF. 3. Those who accept and practice a particular religious belief: church, communion, denomination, persuasion, sect. See RELIGION. 4. A system of religious belief: confession, creed, denomination, persuasion, religion, sect. See RELIGION.

B. DICTIONARY DEFINITIONS OF ‘ŚRADDHĀ’

I. Monier Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary

1. faithful, true, loyal, believing, to have faith or faithfulness, have belief or confidence, believe, be true or trustful (with *na*, “to disbelieve”), to credit, think anything true (two acc.), MBh. – to believe or have faith in or be true to (with dat., and in later language with gen. of thing or person, or with loc. of thing) RV. – to expect anything (acc.) from (abl.) MBh. – to consent, assent to, approve, welcome (with acc. – with *na* “to disapprove”), Kath. – to be desirous of (acc.), wish to (inf.), ib. BhP.: Caus. -dh, payati, to make faithful, render trustful, inspire confidence, RV. x, 151, 5. 3. – f. faith, trust, confidence, trustfulness, faithfulness, belief in (loc. or comp. – “to believe in”), trust, confidence, loyalty (Faith or Faithfulnesses is often personified and in RV. x, 151 invoked as a deity).

V. Capeller Sanskrit-English Dictionary

1. a. trusting, faithful (dat.). – f. , trust, faith, belief in (loc.); fidelity, sincerity (also personif.); wish, desire, longing for (loc., acc. w. prati, infin.); curiosity, whim, appetite.

VI. Śraddhā—Passages from “The Concept of Śraddhā”

From: Seshagiri Rao, K.L. (1974). *The Concept of Śraddhā (in the Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads and the Gītā)*. Delhi, Patna, Varanasi: Motilal Banarsidass. Abbreviated to CS.

“Etymologically, the word *śraddhā* is derived from *śrat*, a root noun probably meaning ‘heart’ and cognate with the English word ‘heart’, and *dhā* to place; it would thus mean: ‘to put one’s heart on something’. The compound is ancient as is derived [from] idg. *kreddhe*, Latin *cred-do*, and Avestan *zrad*. The components of the word *śrat* and *dhā* are sometimes used separately (RV. 1.10.55.5; II. 1.12.5; X. 12.151.5); is also further compounded with other words, as in *śraddhāmanas*, *śraddhādeva*, and *śraddhādeya*.” (CS, p. 4)

“The author of the Vedic Nighantu, Yaska, explains *śrat* as one of the synonyms of truth (*satyanāmani*) and *śraddhā* as an attitude of mind based on truth.” (CS, p. 5)

“The commentator of VS [Vajasaneyi Samhita (White Yajurveda)], Mahīdhara, interprets *śraddhā* in VIII. 5 and XIX. 30 as *āstikyabuddhi*, mental attitude of affirmation or *viśvāsa*, trust. He also elaborates *viśvāsa* as *paralokaviśvāsa* (XVIII. 5), confidence in a world beyond.” (CS, p. 5)

1. *ādārātīśaya* or *bahumāna*, high regard (RV. I.107; V.3);
2. *viśvāsa*, confidence or trust (RV. II.12.5);
3. *puruṣagatobhilāṣa-viśeṣaḥ*, a particular form of human desire (RV. X.151);
4. and explains *śraddhādhānāḥ* as *karmānuṣṭānatatparāḥ*, those who have confidence in and zeal for ritualistic performance. (AV. VI.122.3).” (CS, p. 5-6)

“According to the lexicographer Amarasimha, *śraddhā* signifies confidence or fondness (*śraddhā sampratyayaḥ sprhā*); again: *śraddhātūr dohadavatī*, that is *śraddhātu* means a pregnant woman. Medinī records the usages of respect and desire for the word *śraddhā* (*śraddhādare ca kāṅkṣāyām*).” (CS, p.6)

“According to Vaijayanti, *śraddhā* conveys the meanings of (i) attitude of affirmation and (ii) desire: (*śraddhāstikyābhilāṣayoḥ*); again: *garbhinyāḥ punar ichāyām śraddhā dohaladam hṛde*, *śraddhā* is the desire of a pregnant woman.” (CS, p. 6)

“V.S Apte’s *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* gives the following meanings of the word (*śraddhā*)

1. trust, faith, belief, confidence.
2. belief in divine revelation, religious faith.
3. sedateness, composure of mind.
4. intimacy, familiarity.
5. respect, reverence.
6. strong or vehement desire.
7. the longing of a pregnant woman.

Śraddhālu

1. believing, full of faith.
2. desirous, longing or wishing for (anything).

Śraddhāluḥ: a pregnant woman longing for anything.

Śraddheya: trustworthy.” (CS, p. 6)

“Bohtlingk and Roth in *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch* (St. Petersburg), follow the traditional derivation, viz. *śrat* and *dhā*, and explain the word thus:

1. adj. vertrauend, treu.
2. verb. vertrauen, jemandem glauben; für wahrhalten, etwas glauben; sich einverstanden erklären; ein Verlangen haben nach etwas.
3. noun. Zuversicht, Glaube: Treue, Aufrichtigkeit.” (CS, p. 6)

“Hermann Grassmann in his *Wörterbuch zum Rgveda* (3. Auflage, 1955) explains the word: *śrat* mit *dhā*.

1. Vertrauen hegen, vertrauen, glaubig sein.
2. mit dha einem Gotte, oder seinen eigenschaften.
3. mit dha vertrauen auf die eigen Kraft.
4. mit den caus. von dha, jemand vertrauensvoll, glaubigmachen, *śraddhā*: *śrat dhā*, und nur den unpersonlichen Formen, in denen *śrat* mit *dhā* verschilzt (vgl. Lat. *credo*), und dabei in Bezug auf die Betonung nach Art eines Richtungswortes behandelt wird.” (CS, p. 7)

C. DEFINITION OF ‘ŚRADDHĀ’ IN CAITANYA-CARITĀMṚTA

*‘śraddhā’-śabde—viśvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya*

SYNONYMS

śraddhā-śabde—by the word *śraddhā*; *viśvāsa*—faith; *kahe*—is said; *sudṛḍha*—firm; *niścaya*—certain; *kṛṣṇe*—unto Lord Kṛṣṇa; *bhakti*—devotional service; *kaile*—by executing; *sarva-karma*—all activities; *kṛta*—completed; *haya*—are.

Śraddhā is confident, firm faith that by rendering transcendental loving service to Kṛṣṇa one automatically performs all subsidiary activities. Such faith is favorable to the discharge of devotional service. (Cc. *Madhya* 22.62)

D. PAÑCOPĀSANĀ, FIVE TYPES OF FAITH, A UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE

The different varieties of faith in the world can be categorized within the divisions of *pañcopāsanā*.

I. Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura: Śrī Kṛṣṇa Saṁhita

“Inquiring about the truth of the material world is called *śakta dharma*, because the predominating deity of the material world is the goddess Durgā. All behavior and practice instructed in *śakta dharma* is helpful only in the preliminary stage. Such behavior and practice is meant to bring one closer to spiritual life and materialistic people may be attracted to this only until they begin to enquire only about the Supreme Absolute Truth. *Śakta dharma* is the living entities’ initial spiritual endeavor, and it’s extremely essential for people of that level. When the preliminary stage is further strengthened, one attains the next level. One then considers the energy of work and the superiority of heat over dull matter, and one therefore accepts the sun-god who is the source of heat, as one’s worshipable deity. At that time, *Saura dharma* is awakened. Later when one considers even heat as dull matter and animal consciousness as superior, one attains the third stage, *Ganapatya dharma*. In the fourth gross stage, Lord Siva is worshipped as the pure consciousness of the living entities, and *Śaiva dharma* manifests. In the fifth stage, the consciousness of the living entity worships the supreme consciousness, and thus *Vaiṣṇava dharma* is manifest. By nature, there are five types of paramārthic *dharma*s, or spiritual duties, which have been known throughout the world by different names at different times. If one considers all the different *dharma*s that are current in India and abroad, one can see that they certainly fall within these five categories. The religious principles taught by Mohammed and Jesus Christ are similar to the religious principles taught by Vaiṣṇava sects. Buddhism and Jainism are similar to *śaiva dharma*.” (p. 7-8)

II. Pañcopāsanā in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Therefore, those who are simply astonished by the powers of anything in the creation of the Lord, without any factual information of the Lord Himself, are known as *śaktas*, or worshipers of the great powers. The modern scientist is also captivated by the wonderful actions and reactions of natural phenomena and therefore is also a *śakta*. These lower-grade persons gradually rise to become *saurīyas* (worshipers of the sun-god) or *gāṇapatyas* (worshipers of the mass of people as *janatā janārdana* or *daridra-nārāyaṇa*, etc., in the form of Gaṇapati) and then rise to the platform of worshiping Lord Śiva in search for the ever-existing soul, and then to the stage of worshiping Lord Viṣṇu, the Supersoul, etc., without any information of Govinda, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the original Lord Viṣṇu.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.6.43-45, purp.)

III. Pañcopāsanā in Brahma-saṁhitā

“In the *Brahma-saṁhitā* there are mantras offering obeisances to Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā, the sun-god and Lord Gaṇeśa, as well as Lord Viṣṇu, all of whom are worshiped by the impersonalists as *pañcopāsanā*. In their temples impersonalists install deities of Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Śiva, the sun-god, goddess Durgā and sometimes Lord Brahmā also, and this system is continuing at present in India under the guise of the Hindu religion.” (Cc. *Ādi* 7.157)

TEXT 44

*sṛṣṭi-sthiti-pralaya-sādhana-śaktir eka
chāyeva yasya bhuwānani bibharti durgā
icchānurūpam api yasya ca ceṣṭate sā
govindam ādi-ṭpuruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

The external potency, Māyā, who is of the nature of the shadow of the cit potency, is worshiped by all people as Durgā, the creating, preserving, and destroying agency of this mundane world. I adore the

primeval Lord, Govinda, in accordance with whose will Durgā conducts herself.

COMMENTARY

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī

(Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has offered an explanation about identity of Durgā devi earlier in his commentary on text no. 3 of this 5th chapter of the *Brahma-saṁhitā*.) Sometimes Goddess Durgā is also described as the supreme controller. This is also correct because there is no difference between the potencies and Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of all potencies. This is confirmed by the following words of the *Gautamīya-tantra*: “Kṛṣṇa is Durgā. Durgā is Kṛṣṇa. One who sees that they are different will not become liberated from the cycle of repeated birth and death.”

Durgā is the personal potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and therefore she is Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. For this reason Durgā should not be considered manifested from a portion of the Lord’s illusory potency Māyā. This fact is confirmed by the following statement of the Nirukti:

“Even if one continually worships her, Durgā is still difficult to understand.”

Durgā is also described in *Nārada-ṣaṅkarātra*, in the following conversation of Śruti and Vidyā:

“Durgā is the supreme goddess. She is an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. She is the transcendental potency of the Lord. She is manifested from the form of Lord Maha-Visnu.

“Simply by understanding her one immediately attains the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is not otherwise.

“She is identical with Gokula’s queen Śrī Rādhā, who possesses a great treasure of love for Kṛṣṇa. By her grace the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of all living entities, is easily understood.

“She is the potency of personified devotional service. She worships Her beloved Supreme Lord. Because She is understood only with great difficulty, the saintly

devotees call her “Durgā” (difficult to understand). She is the personal potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and she is always filled with the nectar of love for Him.

“From her is manifested the *mahā-māyā* potency, the controller of all conditioned souls, who covers them with illusion. By this *mahā-māyā* potency the residents of the entire world are bewildered into thinking themselves identical with their external material bodies.”

In the *Sammohana Tantra*, Durgā herself declares:

“I am Durgā. I Possess all virtues. I am not different from Sri Radha, the eternal, supreme goddess of fortune.” In this way the word “Durgā” is explained.

PURPORT

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

(The aforesaid presiding deity of Devī-dhāma is being described.) The world, in which Brahmā takes his stand and hymns the Lord of Goloka, is Devī-dhāma consisting of the fourteen worlds and Durgā is its presiding deity. She is ten-armed, representing the tenfold fruitive activities. She rides on the lion, representing her heroic prowess. She tramples down Mahiṣāsurā, representing the subduer of vices. She is the mother of two sons, Kārttikeya and Gaṇeśa, representing beauty and success. She is placed between Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, representing mundane opulence and mundane knowledge. She is armed with the twenty weapons, representing the various pious activities enjoined by the Vedas for suppression of vices. She holds the snake, representing the beauty of destructive time. Such is Durgā possessing all these manifold forms. Durgā is possessed of *durga*, which means a prison house. When *jīvas* begotten of the marginal potency (*taṭasthā śakti*) forget the service of Kṛṣṇa they are confined in the mundane prison house, the citadel of Durgā. The wheel of karma is the instrument of punishment at this place. The work of purifying these penalized *jīvas* is the duty devolved upon Durgā. She is incessantly engaged in discharging the same by the will of Govinda. When, luckily, the forgetfulness of Govinda on

the part of imprisoned *jīvas* is remarked by them by coming in contact with self-realized souls and their natural aptitude for the loving service of Kṛṣṇa is aroused, Durgā herself then becomes the agency of their deliverance by the will of Govinda. So it behooves everybody to obtain the guileless grace of Durgā, the mistress of this prison house, by propitiating her with the selfless service of Kṛṣṇa. The boons received from Durgā in the shape of wealth, property, recovery from illness, of wife and sons, should be realized as the deluding kindness of Durgā. The mundane psychical jubilations of *daśa-mahā-vidyā*, the ten goddesses or forms of Durgā, are elaborated for the delusion of the fettered souls of this world. *Jīva* is a spiritual atomic part of Kṛṣṇa. When he forgets his service of Kṛṣṇa he is at once deflected by the attracting power of Māyā in this world, who throws him into the whirlpool of mundane fruitive activity (karma) by confining him in a gross body constituted by the five material elements, their five attributes and eleven senses, resembling the garb of a prisoner. In this whirlpool *jīva* has experience of happiness and miseries, heaven and hell. Besides this, there is a subtle body, consisting of the mind, intelligence and ego, inside the gross body. By means of the subtle body, the *jīva* forsakes one gross body and takes recourse to another. The *jīva* cannot get rid of the subtle body, full of nescience and evil desires, unless and until he is liberated. On getting rid of the subtle body he bathes in the Virajā and goes up to Hari-dhāma. Such are the duties performed by Durgā in accordance with the will of Govinda. In the *Bhāgavata śloka*, *vilajyamānayā...durdhiyaḥ*—the relationship between Durgā and the conditioned souls has been described.

Durgā, worshiped by the people of this mundane world, is the Durgā described above. But the spiritual Durgā, mentioned in the mantra which is the outer covering of the spiritual realm of the Supreme Lord, is the eternal maidservant of Kṛṣṇa and is, therefore, the transcendental reality whose shadow, the Durgā of this world, functions in this mundane world as her maidservant. (Vide the purport of *śloka* 3.)

TEXT 45

*kṣīraṁ yathā dadhi vikāra-viśeṣa-yogāt
 sañjāyate na hi tataḥ pṛthag asti hetoḥ
 yaḥ śambhutām api tathā samupaiti kāryād
 govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

Just as milk is transformed into curd by the action of acids, but yet the effect curd is neither same as, nor different from, its cause, viz., milk, so I adore the primeval Lord Govinda of whom the state of Śambhu is a transformation for the performance of the work of destruction.

PURPORT

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

(The real nature of Śambhu, the presiding deity of Maheśa-dhāma, is described.) Śambhu is not a second Godhead other than Kṛṣṇa. Those, who entertain such discriminating sentiment, commit a great offense against the Supreme Lord. The supremacy of Śambhu is subservient to that of Govinda; hence they are not really different from each other. The nondistinction is established by the fact that just as milk treated with acid turns into curd so Godhead becomes a subservient when He Himself attains a distinct personality by the addition of a particular element of adulteration. This personality has no independent initiative. The said adulterating principle is constituted of a combination of the stupefying quality of the deluding energy, the quality of nonplenitude of the marginal potency and a slight degree of the ecstatic-cum-cognitive principle of the plenary spiritual potency. This specifically adulterated reflection of the principle of the subjective portion of the Divinity is Sadāśiva, in the form of the effulgent masculine-symbol-god Śambhu from whom Rudradeva is manifested. In the work of mundane creation as the material cause, in the work of preservation by the destruction of sundry asuras and in the work of destruction to conduct the whole operation, Govinda manifests Himself as *guṇa-avatāra* in the form of Śambhu who is the separated portion of Govinda imbued with the principle of His subjective plenary portion. The personality of the destructive principle in the

form of time has been identified with that of Śambhu by scriptural evidences that have been adduced in the commentary. The purport of the *Bhāgavata śloka*s, viz., *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ*, etc., is that Śambhu, in pursuance of the will of Govinda, works in union with his consort Durgādevī by his own time energy. He teaches pious duties (dharma) as stepping-stones to the attainment of spiritual service in the various *tantra-śāstras*, etc., suitable for *jīvas* in different grades of the conditional existence. In obedience to the will of Govinda, Śambhu maintains and fosters the religion of pure devotion by preaching the cult of illusionism (*Māyāvāda*) and the speculative *āgama-śāstras*. The fifty attributes of individual souls are manifest in a far vaster measure in Śambhu and five additional attributes not attainable by *jīvas* are also partly found in him. So Śambhu cannot be called a *jīva*. He is the lord of *jīva* but yet partakes of the nature of a separated portion of Govinda.

Text 46

*dīpārcir eva hi daśāntaram abhyupetya
dīpāyate vivṛta-hetu-samāna-dharmā
yas tādṛg eva hi ca viṣṇutayā vibhāti
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*

When the flame of one candle is expanded to another candle and placed in a different position, it burns separately, and its illumination is as powerful as the original candle's. Similarly, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda, expands Himself in different Viṣṇu forms, who are all as luminous, powerful, and opulent as He. Let me worship that Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda.

Text 47

*yaḥ kāraṇārnava-jale bhajati sma yoga-
nidrām ananta-jagad-aṇḍa-sa-roma-kūpāḥ
ādāhara-śaktim avalambya parām sva-mūrtim
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who assumes His own great subjective form, which bears the name Śeśa, replete with the all-accommodating potency and reposing in the Causal Ocean with the infinity of the worlds in the pores of His hair, enjoys creative sleep [yoga-nidrā].

Text 48

*yasyaika-niśvasita-kālam athāvalambya
jīvanti loma-vilajā jagad-aṇḍa-nāthāḥ
viṣṇur mahān sa iha yasya kalā-viśeṣo
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

Brahmā and other lords of the mundane worlds, appearing from the pores of hair of Mahā-Viṣṇu, remain alive as long as the duration of one exhalation of Mahā-Viṣṇu's breath. I adore the primeval Lord, Govinda, of whose subjective personality Mahā-Viṣṇu is the portion of a plenary portion.

TEXT 49

*bhāsvān yathāśma-śakaleṣu niṣeṣu tejah
svīyam kiyat prakāṣayaty api tadvad atra
brahmā ya eṣa jagad-aṇḍa-vidhāna-kartā
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

I adore the primeval Lord Govinda from whom the separated subjective portion Brahmā receives his power for the regulation of the mundane world, just as the sun manifests some portion of his own light in all the effulgent gems that bear the names of sūryakānta, etc.

PURPORT

Brahmā is two types: in certain *kalpas* when the potency of the Supreme Lord infuses Himself in an eligible *jīva*, the latter acts in the office of Brahmā and

creates the universe. In those *kalpas* when no eligible *jīva* is available, after the Brahmā of the previous *kalpa* is liberated, Kṛṣṇa, by the process of allotment of His own potency creates the Brahmā who has the nature of the *avatāra* (descent) of the Divinity in the active mundane principle (*rajo-guṇa*). By principle Brahmā is superior to ordinary *jīvas* but is not the direct Divinity. The divine nature is present in a greater measure in Śambhu than in Brahmā. The fundamental significance of the above is that the aggregate of fifty attributes, belonging to the *jīva*, are present in a fuller measure in Brahmā who possesses, in a lesser degree, five more attributes which are not found in *jīvas*. But in Śambhu both the fifty attributes of *jīvas* as also the five additional attributes found in Brahmā are present in even greater measure than in Brahmā.

Text 50

*yat-pāda-pallava-yugam vinidhāya kumbhā-
dvandve praṇāma-samaye sa gaṇādhirājah
vighnān vihartum alam asya jagat-trayasya
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*

I adore the primeval Lord Govinda, whose lotus feet are always held by Gaṇeśa upon the pair of tumuli protruding from his elephant head in order to obtain power for his function of destroying all the obstacles on the path of progress of the three worlds.

PURPORT

The power of destroying all obstacles to mundane prosperity has been delegated to Gaṇeśa who is the object of worship to those who are eligible to worship him. He has obtained a rank among the five gods as Brahmā possessing mundane quality. The self-same Gaṇeśa is a god in possession of delegated power by infusion of the divine power. All his glory rests entirely on the grace of Govinda.

TEXT 51

*agnir mahi gaganam ambu marud diśaś ca
 kālas tathātma-manasīti jagat-trayāṇi
 yasmād bhavanti vibhavanti viśanti yaṁ ca
 govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

The three worlds are composed of the nine elements, viz., fire, earth, ether, water, air, direction, time, soul and mind. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda from whom they originate, in whom they exist and into whom they enter at the time of the universal cataclysm.

PURPORT

There is nothing in the three worlds save the five elements, ten quarters, time, *jīva*-soul, and the mental principle allied with the subtle body consisting of mind, intelligence and ego of conditioned souls. The elevationists (*karmīs*) make their offerings in sacrifice in the fire. Conditioned souls know nothing beyond this perceptible world of nine elements. The *jīva* is the self-same soul whose ecstatic delight the joyless liberationists (*jñānīs*) aspire after. Both the principles that are respectively depicted as *ātmā* and *prakṛti* by the system of Sāṅkhya are included in the above. In other words all the principles that have been enunciated by all the speculative philosophers (*tattva-vādīs*) are included in these nine elements. Śrī Govinda is the source of the appearance, continuance and subsidence of all these principles.

TEXT 52

*yac-cakṣur eṣa savitā sakala-grahāṇāṁ
 rājā samasta-sura-mūrtir aśeṣa-tejāḥ
 yasyājṣayā bhramati sambhṛta-kāla-cakro
 govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

The sun who is the king of all the planets, full of infinite effulgence, the image of the good soul, is as the eye of this world. I adore the primeval

Lord Govinda in pursuance of whose order the sun performs his journey mounting the wheel of time.

PURPORT

Certain professors of the Vedic religion worship the sun as Brahman. The sun is one of the hierarchy of the five gods. Some people target in heat the source of this world and therefore designate the sun, the only location of heat, as the root cause of this world. Notwithstanding all that may be said to the contrary, the sun is after all only the presiding deity of a sphere of the sum total of all mundane heat and is hence a god exercising delegated authority. The sun performs his specific function of service certainly by the command of Govinda.

IV. Pañcopāsakas

“Actually these are not devotees of anyone. As it is said, to be a servant of everyone, is to be the servant of none.” (Cc. *Madhya* 17.95, purp.)

E. TEN TYPES OF PROOF: TATTVA-SANDARBHA OF JĪVA GOSVĀMĪ

Since the relation of *faith* and *proof* is of a fundamental nature we decided to include it in the initial section outlining the general concept.

In India’s philosophical tradition ten *pramāṇas* or valid means of acquiring knowledge are recognized. Some philosophers accept certain combinations of these as valid and reject others. Each gives arguments to support his diverse conclusions.

The ten traditional *pramāṇas* are:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Arsyā | 6. Aitihya |
| 2. Upamāna | 7. Ceṣṭa |
| 3. Arthapatti | 8. Pratyakṣa |
| 4. Abhava | 9. Anumāna |
| 5. Sambhava | 10. Śabda |

1. Arsyā (“exceptional utterance”)

These are utterances of a sage or demigod. There are many exceptional sages, Kapila, Gautama, Patañjali, and others, who founded a school of philosophy. They naturally have differences of opinion and therefore the *Mahābhārata* (*Vana-parva* 313.117) says, *nāsāv ṛṣir yasya matam na bhinnam*, “One is not considered a philosopher if his opinion is not different from others”. As they are great thinkers we consider their utterances, but for a common man it is impossible to determine who gives the valid conclusion.

2. Upamāna (comparison)

Knowledge about an unknown object can be gained by comparing it to a familiar object. If we have seen a cow, for example, but have not seen a “gavaya” or a forest cow, and if someone tells us that a forest cow resembles a cow, by comparison we can recognize a forest cow.

3. Arthapatti (presumption)

Here we assume an unknown fact in order to account for a known fact that is otherwise inexplicable. For example, if fat Devadatta does not eat during the daytime, one can safely assume that he eats at night. Otherwise his stoutness without eating during the daytime remains unexplained, as Devadatta cannot get fat by fasting nor can he maintain his weight without eating.

4. Abhava (non-existence)

Non-perception of a qualified object by a qualified sense is called perception of the *abhava* or the non-existence of that object. For example, a book is a qualified object for the visual perception and the eyes are the qualified senses or means of perception. When one does not see a book on a table he experiences its non-existence. This is classified as a separate category of perception, because there is no actual contact between the object and the sense instrument. Thus what is perceived is the non-existence of the object.

5. Sambhava (inclusion)

This *pramāṇa* is based on the experience that the higher quantity includes the lower quantity. A hundred dollars automatically includes ones, fives, tens, and so on. To infer this knowledge, gained by inclusion, is called *sambhava*.

6. Aitiḥya (tradition)

This *pramāṇa* applies when something is known by common belief or tradition but the original source of that knowledge is unknown. For instance, there is a popular belief that the Old Fort in New Delhi was built by the Pāṇḍavas. We have no written proof or scriptural authority to support this, but the belief has been passed down for generations to the present day by tradition.

7. Ceṣṭa (gesture)

To acquire knowledge through bodily gestures or symbols is called *cesta*. For instance, one makes a “V” sign with his fingers to indicate victory, or in Deity worship *mudrās* are shown to the Deity to convey certain messages.

8. Pratyakṣa (direct perception)

What we directly perceive with our senses may be valid or invalid knowledge; however, only valid knowledge is to be considered as *pramāṇa*. Sense perception is the principal means of acquiring knowledge in this material world. Both theistic and atheistic philosophers generally accept *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* as one of the means to valid knowledge. Direct perception is of two types—external and internal. An external perception is when knowledge is acquired through our senses. An internal perception is when the knowledge is acquired by our mind. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.7) Lord Kṛṣṇa lists the mind as the sixth sense (*manah-ṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi*). Through the mind we perceive emotions such as pain, leisure, love, hate, and so forth.

On account of the inherent four defects *pratyakṣa* is not always a reliable process of acquiring valid knowledge. It is limited only to the present time; it cannot extend into the past or future. According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, however, perfected devotees

who achieve direct perception of the Lord, His abode, and His associates through their spiritual trance, all have purified senses and have transcended the four defects. Such persons are reliable sources of knowledge because of their purified sense perception. This is confirmed in the ninth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* where Lord Kṛṣṇa says that this knowledge leads to direct realization of transcendence by experience (*pratyakṣāvagamān*). Likewise, in the sixth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord assures Arjuna that in the state of transcendental trance, *samādhi*, the devotee acquires pure knowledge through his purified intelligence and transcendental senses (*buddhi-grāhyam atīndriyam vetti*). This is called *vaiduṣya pratyakṣa* and it is flawless.

9. Anumāna (inference)

This is when we acquire knowledge by deduction. Literally, *anumāna* means “knowing after,” because the knowledge is arrived at after putting together known bits of information to arrive at an unknown but apparently logical conclusion. Such inferred knowledge is based on the probable relation between what is known and what is deduced. That in turn is based on prior direct perception or prior verbal testimony. This means the deduced outcome is dependent on the evidence. This concomitant relation between the evidence and the deducted conclusion is called *vyāpti*.

Inference is of two kinds, inference for one’s self and inference for others. An example of inference for one’s self is when a person may make out the concomitant relationship between smoke and fire and arrive at the universal generalization “Wherever there is smoke there is fire” after repeatedly experiencing it in the kitchen and elsewhere. Then if he sees smoke hanging over a mountain in the distance he may recall his prior experience, that wherever there is smoke there is invariably fire, and thus he concludes, “The mountain is on fire”.

Inference for others consists of a syllogistic formula that has five steps. After arriving at an inferred conclusion a person employs this method, with a view to enable others to arrive at the same inferred conclusion. A syllogism follows this format:

- a. Proposition: The mountain has fire.
- b. Reason: Because it has smoke.
- c. Universal proposition: Wherever there is smoke there is fire.
- d. Application: The mountain has smoke.
- e. Conclusion: Therefore it is on fire.

Any error in perceiving the cause or any deviation in the universal generalization then the conclusion will be faulty. In the above example, if the observer mistakes clouds over the mountain for smoke or perceives the smoke just after rain has extinguished the fire, then his deduced conclusion will be wrong. Hence, *anumāna*, like *pratyakṣya*, is not a foolproof method of acquiring knowledge.

10. Śabda (revealed knowledge)

Śabda literally means sound, but as a *pramāṇa* it refers to articulate sound, which has meaning and which is spoken or written by an *apta-puruṣa*, a trustworthy person, an authority. Ultimately, *śabda* applies to revealed knowledge about the transcendental reality that specifically comes through a trustworthy person who is free from the four defects. This kind of *śabda* is distinct from the *śabda* used in mundane transactions, called *pauruṣeya śabda*, which is not always trustworthy. For Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī *śabda* is restricted to the revealed knowledge of the Vedas. This is called *apauruṣeya śabda*, revealed knowledge from a superhuman source. It originates from the Supreme Personality of Godhead and is received in disciplic succession from a bonafide guru. *Apauruṣeya śabda*, therefore, because it is free of the four defects is the perfect *pramāṇa*.

Section Two:

Faith—Personal Conviction

Ādau śraddhā—Spiritual life begins with faith

Ādau śraddhā, spiritual life begins with faith. How does it develop by association of devotees, by *ajñāta-sukṛti*, spiritual advancement that has been made unknowingly and unintentionally. By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotee, *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*. Piety can bring us closer to receive that mercy, although the mercy may be given to those who have no piety at all. *Patita-pāvana Gaura Hari*. The most merciful incarnation. *yeṣāṁ tv anta-gatāṁ pāpāṁ janānāṁ puṇya-karmaṇām*—Persons who have acted piously in previous lives and in this life and whose sinful actions are completely eradicated are freed from the dualities of delusion, and they engage themselves in My service with determination. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.28) The good qualities of being sinless and acting according to scriptures may lead to the association of devotees, which is the factor that can make us free from the illusory energy.

We may all recall how even in early childhood we were inclined towards spirituality or devotion. I had a large collection of comic books and my favorite one, which I read again and again was Tintin in Tibet. It had *stūpas*, lamas with mystic power and even a sacred cow. A clear indication, one might think. Others may have similar type of memories of early childhood spiritual tendencies, whatever maybe, without the mercy of the Vaiṣṇava one can not develop that initial faith in devotional service. As I grew up to adolescence I wrote songs accompanied by guitar and one of the choruses was, “I am nothing but a seeker for what I never found.” Later when the devotees actually tried to offer me Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I suddenly made maneuvers to avoid them, and only after they presented it to me again and again and Kṛṣṇa turned my life upside down, did I accept. It wasn’t because of the piety,

which I thought I had while overlooking my sinful activity, but because of the devotees mercy that I finally recognized Kṛṣṇa consciousness as the truth.

However that initial faith was very weak and shaky and I had serious doubts to deal with. Besides the general philosophy, I was coming to question my motivation, whether I really wanted to get that intensely involved in spiritual life. Moment by moment I realized that I did not only have spiritual desires, but also intense material ones. I was convinced that Hare Kṛṣṇa was very exalted, but was it really me?

Faith is dynamic a growing process not so easy to develop in this iron age of Kali, predominated by the cheaters and the cheated. Who to belief, how many times betrayed? There may be a desire for freedom from corruption and hypocrisy within and without and after one has found deep and fundamental elements of truth in Kṛṣṇa consciousness one may just jump forward in to a spiritual movement and accept the rest blindly. One becomes swept up in the rapids of a total change of lifestyle, which may carry one years ahead in time before one comes to question consciously, “Who am I really ?” And not just “What am I supposed to be”? In the beginning it’s all about what you do, but with time that alone won’t suffice, stronger and stronger the need arises for authenticity.

Faith a Pretense

Nietzsche had no faith at all in the Christian believers, he wrote, “For example, in the case of Luther—‘faith’ has been no more than a cloak, a pretense, a *curtain* behind which the instincts have played their game—a shrewd *blindness* to the domination of *certain* of the instincts. . . I have already called ‘faith’ the specially christian form of *shrewdness*—people always *talk* of their ‘faith’ and *act* according to their instincts. . .” (Nietzsche, *The Anti-christ*)

The human side of Luther

Luther himself was an interesting person initially he lived as a priest and monk. The ecclesiastics of that time were living far remote from spiritual standards and Luther developed disgust for the entire system. While living as a monk, he recognized the

sinfulness within himself and ultimately decided that the monastic life of celibacy was not feasible for anyone. Subsequently he developed a philosophy, “It will not harm the soul if the body is clothed in secular dress, dwells in unconsecrated places, eats and drinks as others do.” (Marten Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*, p. 279). Later he rejected clerical celibacy as well as monasticism, and, making himself the example, married a nun (Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, *A Hare Kṛṣṇa at SMU*, p. 181) He believed in the mercy of Jesus Christ for those who were faithful to the New Testament.

A revolving door

ISKCON has sometimes been referred to as a revolving door, because many devotees after living a number of years in the temple return to mainstream society, which may often compromise the standards of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There is no bar to practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness in any circumstance, but purity remains the criterion and the only force that can free us from revolving life after life in the cycle of birth and death.

So let us review the points we have discussed so far:

- spiritual life begins with faith.
- faith comes from mercy à association à piety can act as a catalyst
- *ajñāta-sukṛti*—unknown spiritual benefit leads to that initial faith
- *komala-śraddhā*—the initial faith is weak
- and may be partially blind
- doubt in our own ability to follow
- not only what you do, but also who you are.
- faith is dynamic
- what about the contradiction between our faith and our instincts?
- the need for authenticity
- but not at the expense of purity
- the revolving door

Faith—Personal Conviction

Taste moves all

Ānanda-mayo 'bhyāsāt (Vedānta-sūtra 1.1.12) by nature every living being is pleasure seeking. Our faith will be directed, wherever we believe that happiness will be found. The *Bhagavad-gītā* describes that one develops faith according to the mode of nature that one has acquired. Prabhupāda imitated the sounds of cars in New York—“woosh, woosh”—needlessly speeding by, not making any real progress in life.

Sacrifice

Another fundamental principle of life is ‘sacrifice’, no one can avoid it.

*saha-yajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā
purovāca prajāpatiḥ
anena prasaviṣyadhvam
eṣa vo 'stv iṣṭa-kāma-dhuk*

In the beginning of creation, the Lord of all creatures sent forth generations of men and demigods, along with sacrifices for Viṣṇu, and blessed them by saying, “Be thou happy by this yajña [sacrifice] because its performance will bestow upon you everything desirable for living happily and achieving liberation.

(Bhagavad-gītā 3.10)

If everything is offered to Viṣṇu the result will be happiness. All other types of sacrifice lead to distress. Sacrifice implies that one must first make endeavor and then gets result. Devotional service does give immediate results in partial satisfaction and complete satisfaction upon reaching the highest goal. *tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca* Devotees become pleased and enjoy transcendental bliss. Prabhupāda writes, “In the preliminary stage of devotional service they relish the transcendental pleasure

from the service itself, and in the mature stage they are actually situated in love of God.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.9, purp.)

Duty: A devotee must sacrifice material desire

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā
mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ
tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena
yajeta puruṣaṁ param*

A person who has broader intelligence, whether he be full of all material desire, without any material desire, or desiring liberation, must by all means worship the supreme whole, the Personality of Godhead.

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.10)

To maintain material desires

The *Padma Purāṇa* describes ten offenses against the Holy Name which block one from the blissful taste of transcendence. In the 10th the point is mentioned that one should not maintain material desire. The words ‘*maintain material desire*’ mean to act to try and fulfill the material desire. ‘*Tīvra*- strong, severe, intense, hot.’ The word is sometimes used to describe the direct effect of the Sunrays. *Tīvra-bhakti* refers applying oneself fully to the process of devotional service without interruption or deviation.

The risk of fall down

In order to go beyond duty we must look for purification. By reorganizing our life and serve Kṛṣṇa according to the directions of guru, *sādhū* and *śāstra* our external behavior becomes purified and the internal will quickly follow. Duty and austerity are almost synonymous. Austerity means voluntarily accepting inconvenience. It is

hard to remain on the spiritual path for a lifetime based on duty alone, from such a platform one can fall down any moment. We have a genuine need for *bhajana*, to worship and serve our Lord with deep appreciation for His kindness, His mercy and all of His other unlimited, wonderful qualities. Not merely performing *sādhana* as a duty, but becoming deeply absorbed in appreciating hearing and chanting the glories of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

The reward at the end

Some believe that the results will all come at the end as a final reward, meanwhile they are chanting mechanically and spiritual life appears to be a life of self-denial.

Overcoming material desire

Kṛṣṇa helps the devotee to cleanse the heart

“Outside the gateway of the temple, all the roads were also cleansed, and no one could tell exactly how this was done.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya* 12.135)

In commenting on the cleansing of the Guṇḍicā temple, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura says that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was personally giving instructions on how one should receive Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, within one's cleansed and pacified heart. If one wants to see Kṛṣṇa seated in his heart, he must first cleanse the heart, as prescribed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka* (*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*). In this age, everyone's heart is unclean, as confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadrāṇi*). To wash all dirty things accumulated within the heart, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu advised everyone to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. The first result will be that the heart is cleansed (*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*). Similarly, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.17) also confirms this statement:

*śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
punya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ*

*hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadrāṇi
vidhūnoti suhṛt satām*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who relishes His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.

A material desire is explained as a desire to enjoy the material world to its fullest extent. In modern language, this is called economic development. An inordinate desire for economic development is considered to be like straws and grains of sand within the heart. If one is overly engaged in material activity, the heart will always remain disturbed. As stated by Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura:

*samsāra-viṣānāle, divā-nīśi hiyā jvale,
juddāite nā kainu upāya*

In other words, endeavor for material opulence is against the principle of devotional service. Material enjoyment includes activities such as great sacrifices for auspicious activity, charity, austerity, elevation to the higher planetary system, and even living happily within the material world.

Modernized material benefits are like the dust of material contamination. When this dust is agitated by the whirlwind of fruitive activity, it overcomes the heart. Thus the mirror of the heart is covered with dust. There are many desires to perform auspicious and inauspicious activities, but people do not know how life after life they are keeping their hearts unclean. One who cannot give up the desire for fruitive activity is understood to be covered by the dust of material contamination. Karmīs generally think that the interaction of fruitive activities can be counteracted by another karma, or fruitive activity. This is certainly a mistaken conception. If one is deluded by such a conception, he is cheated by his own activity. Such activities

have been compared to an elephant's bathing. An elephant may bathe very thoroughly, but as soon as it comes out of the river, it immediately takes some sand from the land and throws it all over its body. If one suffers due to his past fruitive activities, he cannot counteract his suffering by performing auspicious activities. The sufferings of human society cannot be counteracted by material plans. The only way suffering can be mitigated is by Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When one takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and engages himself in the devotional service of the Lord—beginning with chanting and hearing the glories of the Lord—the cleansing of the heart begins.

Cultural Transplant

How much can we absorb of what we know of Vedic culture through scriptures or whatever remains in India? How much can we retain of our own western tradition without compromising our Kṛṣṇa consciousness? We are living in the West.

Miracles

“It is not possible to have a reasonable belief against miracles.”—Pascal, *Pensées* xiii, 815

There are no miracles

Prabhupāda: “Miracles means you cannot conceive how it is being done.”

Miracle

*ananyāś cintayanto mām
ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānām
yoga-kṣemam vahāmy aham*

But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form—to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have.

(Bhagavad-gītā 9.22)

Arjunācārya, was a poor brahmana. He wrote a commentary on the *Gītā*. When he came to the word “*vahāmy*”—“I carry”—he changed it for “*karomy*”—“I have it done.” Because he could not believe that the Lord would personally carry what the devotee needed. After making this change, he went out begging. While he was out two beautiful boys, one of dark and the other of a lighter complexion came at the door of his house to deliver all kinds of foodstuff. The boys told his wife, that they were in anxiety, because her husband might come and beat them. “Come one don’t worry, she said, My husband would never do such a thing.” But the dark-complexioned boy said, “Oh no, just see,” and showed the marks on his back where he had been beaten. Then they ran away.

The wife became very bewildered and upset and did what she had never done before, she cooked and ate before her husband. When he came back he saw all the food and learned that his wife had already eaten and he couldn’t understand what was going on. When he said something she was all-disturbed with him about beating the boys. What boys, he questioned now even more confused. The ones you sent with the food, she replied. As little by little, he heard the whole story, he could understand, that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama had personally come. The marks on Kṛṣṇa’s back were from changing the *śāstra*. Kṛṣṇa had personally come to show him what he lacked.

Blind Faith

To blindly follow the right thing will also give positive result, but perseverance will be difficult, therefore blind faith is not condemned per se, but not recommended.

ajñānād athavā jñānād

uttamaśloka-nāma yat

*saṅkīrtitam aghaṁ puniso
dahed edho yathānalāḥ*

As a fire burns dry grass to ashes, so the holy name of the Lord, whether chanted knowingly or unknowingly, burns to ashes, without fail, all the reactions of one’s sinful activities.

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.2.18)

Philosophy

Śrīla Prabhupāda: (*blind faith*) “That is not our point. We want to understand God through philosophy. ‘Through philosophy’ means logic. Blind faith is not our business.” (Room Conversation – January 27, 1977, Bhubaneswar)

Suspension of disbelief

We do not ask the newcomer to just have faith, but we ask for a ‘*suspension of disbelief*’: “The interruption of a disbelieving attitude so that one may imaginatively and perhaps sympathetically enter in to the perspective of another system of thought (a religion, a philosophy, a play, a ritual) in order to see the interconnections of, and experience the feelings of, that system”. (From: *Harper Collins Dictionary of Philosophy*)

Blind faith to a degree

In one sense, one could say that a certain degree of blindness remains for devotional service performed in practice. The *Mādhurya Kādambinī* states that only in the stage of *kṛṣṇa-prema* the eradication of *anarthas* has been completed. One might say that until one has reached that stage one can not completely see things as they are.

The effect of various degrees of *anarthas* may be compared to different degrees of darkness. However even if one is affected by some level of *anartha* one is still safe

if one is properly situated on the spiritual path. While driving in the darkness of *anartha* we may not be able to see the entire landscape of reality as-it-is at best some contours, but if we keep our eyes on the road and the white lines of regulative principles, and don't look over our shoulder at material desires, but drive safely between them by the headlights of Guru and Gaurāṅga's order then we are already liberated and we will attain *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Reason and Belief

Reason divorced from belief is mental speculation while belief without reason can easily become fanaticism. "Religion without philosophy is sentiment, or sometimes fanaticism, while philosophy without religion is mental speculation." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.3, purp.)

"Belief may stem from an immediate, non-reasoned acceptance of an idea (a feeling, a hunch, a want) or from deliberately thought-out argument." (From: *Harper Collins, Philosophy Dictionary*)

In our own Vaiṣṇava-terminology we speak of *realization* as being a direct experience of the truth of the divine reality described in the Vaiṣṇava tradition. The term may be employed even for a slight and partial experience, but in the fullest sense of the term, it includes; direct perception of Kṛṣṇa, in a Personal Form and of His energies, through a completely absorbing experience,- on the sensual, mental, emotional and intellectual plane and even beyond on the level of the soul -, of eternity, full knowledge and bliss.

In other words whereas 'belief' without reasonable argument comes across as *blind* and therefore naturally naive, weak, dreamy, unsubstantial and lacking actual verification; on the contrary, belief supported by argument can be transmitted instantaneously to another person through reasoning. Belief based on realization can also be transmitted to another person, but the actual experience can only be had

after completing a prescribed process, which may extend over a certain period of time, similar to the requisites of a scientific experiment.

“Indicative logic”

There is another type of logic, than the hard-fact-verification approach of empiricism. There is a kind of logic that acts as an indication of the nature of things and makes sense.

For example in the *Bhagavad-gītā* we find the reincarnation verse:

*dehino 'smin yathā dehe
kaumāraṁ yauvanam jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāptir
dhīras tatra na muhyati*

As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.13)

The verse can not be taken as hard empiric evidence, why would one necessarily reach the conclusion, that ‘the soul similarly passes into another body at death’? But it is implying ‘a consistency of things’, which make sense if the world is ‘one unit’ under the auspices of a Supreme Person with His particular peculiarity. Often times our faith or belief in so many given situations in every-day-life is based on this kind of ‘indicative logic’.

Another example of this in relation to Kṛṣṇa consciousness would be that Kṛṣṇa is described as *navayauvana*—‘ever youthful’—it makes sense, why would the Supreme Lord subject himself to old age?

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī is inviting us, that if one is indeed interested in logic and argument, than he should apply it to the mercy of Śrī Caitanya

Mahāprabhu and he will find it to be strikingly wonderful. This is clearly the way of ‘indicative logic’, by studying the life and nature of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, we’ll become more and more impressed how He is consistently wonderful. And we become more and more convinced, that if there is a Supreme Lord, that He must have the qualities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and that therefore, He must be God. For that reason we are trying to understand the qualities of Kṛṣṇa as described in the scriptures and through deduction.

The Qualities of Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa is all attractive because of His great compassion (a logical deduction by Śrīla Prabhupāda)

“The Supreme Lord descends out of compassion because He is more anxious to have us return home, back to Godhead, than we are to go.” (*Teachings of Lord Kapila*, Vs 1, p.10)

Prabhupāda has deeply thought about the question, why Kṛṣṇa descends in this world and offers a profound and satisfying answer.

Wonderful Linguist

“Rūpa Gosvāmī says that a person who knows the languages of different countries, especially the Sanskrit language, which is spoken in the cities of the demigods—as well as other worldly languages, including those of the animals—is called a wonderful linguist. It appears from this statement that Kṛṣṇa can also speak and understand the languages of the animals. An old woman in Vṛndāvana, present at the time of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, once stated in surprise, “How wonderful it is that Kṛṣṇa, who owns the hearts of all the young girls of Vrajabhūmi, can nicely speak the language of Vrajabhūmi with the gopīs, while in Sanskrit He speaks with the demigods, and in the language of the animals He can even speak with the cows and buffalo! Similarly, in the language of the Kashmir Province, and with the parrots and other birds, as well as in most common languages, Kṛṣṇa is so expressive!” She inquired from the gopīs as to how Kṛṣṇa had become so expert in speaking so many

different types of languages. (*Nectar of Devotion*, Ch. 21 ‘Qualities of Kṛṣṇa’, 7. Wonderful Linguist)

This illustrates that Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of all living beings, who takes personal interest in their well being.

Aloof from this world

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* we are looking at Kṛṣṇa, who appears to be very aloof. In the midst of the two armies—*senayor ubhayor madhye*—Arjuna is *viṣīdantam*—‘lamenting’—and Kṛṣṇa *prahasan*—‘smiling’. Later He tells Arjuna you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief. The second chapter is very much establishing the eternity of the soul and considers the fate of the body not very important. The eleventh chapter demonstrates the Universal form, in which the Lord just crunches up the heroes of the battlefield between the teeth of His unlimited huge gaping mouths. *kālo ’smi loka-kṣaya-kṛt pravṛddho*—“Time I am, the great destroyer of worlds.” And yet we see that throughout the *Bhagavad-gītā* on a practical level Kṛṣṇa is very involved as the friend and chariot-driver of Arjuna.

Bhakta-rūpa

Caitanya Mahāprabhu is teaching us wonderful standards of life as a devotee, with very considerate dealings between devotees, deep absorption in the constant glorification of the Lord through the Holy Name, *kṛṣṇa-kathā* and any other possible means and He is always thinking of how to deliver the conditioned souls. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī summed up the philosophy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as *vaiṣṇava-seva*, *nāma-ruci* and *jīva-dayā*: ‘service to the Vaiṣṇavas’, ‘taste for chanting’, and ‘mercy upon all living beings’ respectively. These three are profound goals for a devotee’s meditation.

Kṛṣṇa is attracted by the smallest service

“Brahmā addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa as Acyuta because the Lord is never forgetful of a little service rendered by His devotee. He is so kind and affectionate towards His

devotees that a little service by them is accepted by Him as a great deal.” (Kṛṣṇa Book, Ch. 14: “Prayers Offered by Lord Brahmā to Lord Kṛṣṇa”)

I like this description of Kṛṣṇa, it makes Him attractive to me, because He is a person who cares, a God with a heart.

Jīva Gosvāmī is perceiving the forest of Vṛndāvana with pure transcendental vision

“Ah! Look at the deep love Vṛndāvana forest feels: Sometimes Lord Kṛṣṇa’s forest becomes stunned like a motionless mountain. Sometimes that forest trembles, its leaves and petals moving. Suddenly pushing out many new sprouts, that forest sometimes stands with the hairs of its body erect in ecstasy.” (Jīva Gosvāmī, *Gopāl campu* 1.20)

Personally I find Jīva Gosvāmī’s description very attractive, he sees the reality of Vṛndāvana on the level of the spiritual dimension, whereas most of us just remain in the dimension of a North-Indian village between Delhi and Agra. We may only be able to imagine a spiritual world- where even the forest is overwhelmed with love of God—but it sounds certainly wonderful and attracts my heart. It would be fantastic to be in such a place. Such descriptions increase my faith, that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is worthwhile.

Prabhupāda, the living proof

The simple secret of success

“Now, I’ll say from my practical life... It is not pride. Actually everyone knows that my Guru Mahārāja had thousands of disciples. So out of thousands of disciples, practically I am little successful. That everyone knows. Why? Because I firmly believed in the words of my guru. That’s all. This is the... There may be many other Godbrother, maybe very learned and very advanced, whatever it may be, favored, and... Everyone claims that “I am the most favorite.” (Room Conversation – January 28, 1977, Bhubaneswar)

He had full faith in the words of Lord Caitanya

“The potency of spreading Kṛṣṇa Consciousness is everywhere the same. That was experimented by me in your country, where I came alone without any support; and Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He has sent me so many boys and girls like you. Lord Caitanya said that every village and town on the surface of the world will know the message of the Sāṅkīrtana movement. This very statement affirms that in every village and town all over the world there are many candidates who are awaiting this message.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda, letter to: Sudama – Los Angeles 17 February, 1970)

Prabhupāda was beyond falldown

“When I first met Śrīla Prabhupāda, I asked him, ‘Is there a stage in spiritual advancement from which one won’t fall back?’ Prabhupāda replied, “Yes.” And his answer convinced me. The perfect answer in a book would not have been enough for me.” (Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami)

Teacher by example

Pusta Kṛṣṇa: I personally, I don’t think that even Americans or Westerners would have accepted even your teachings as clear as they are without having your personal association and seeing your example. I think people would have thought that it’s totally impossible to do such a thing.

Hari-Sauri: It would have remained theoretical. But because you came and showed practical example, then everything has become very easy.

(Room Conversation – April 22, 1976, Melbourne)

Proof-hungry

“‘Man is the architect of his own fortune.’ Śrīla Prabhupāda used to quote that. He could boast that he had started the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement with only forty rupees and that now it had become a worldwide movement. His ‘boasting’ assured

his followers that Kṛṣṇa would take care of us. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself was the proof of that fact. Śrīla Prabhupāda saw us as ‘proof-hungry.’ He tried to assuage our doubts in whatever way he could.” (Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, *Churning the milk ocean*, p. 86)

Faith must be a personal matter

Śrīla Prabhupāda you were also somewhat skeptical about too much dependence of one brother upon another. You encouraged us to simply follow our spiritual master according to our own convictions. That seems realistic. When we are following our own convictions, we tend not to expect so much of others. We also understand, that no matter where we go, we can serve our spiritual master. No one can decide for us what our convictions should be, except in a very general way. (Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami, *Churning the milk ocean*, p. 86)

Prabhupāda was a transparent via-medium

“He made a pirouette at the bottom of the stairs and said, ‘My spiritual master made me a diamond.’” (Trivikrama Swami)

Prabhupāda, a pure devotee

“No pretense, no facades, no fancy tricks. Though descended from Goloka no ‘holier than thou’ tendency. Just what you get is what you see—a hundred percent pure devotee.” (Ganapati Swami, ’96)

The perfect vision

“What pleases you most Śrīla Prabhupāda?” Prabhupāda replied: ‘If you love Kṛṣṇa!’” (Atlanta, 1975)

Prabhupāda was always happy

“*Ānandamayo ’bhyāsāt* (Vedānta-sūtra 1.1.12): He is by nature full of bliss. We shall never find Kṛṣṇa unhappy. Kṛṣṇa is always happy, and whoever associates with Him is also happy.” (*Teachings of Queen Kuntī*, Ch. 4: “Approaching Kṛṣṇa, the All-pervading Truth”)

To See Kṛṣṇa or not?

I. Seeing Kṛṣṇa always

Did you see Kṛṣṇa?

The journalist had heard that the pure devotee always acts according to the desire of Kṛṣṇa. His question was; ‘How does he know the desire of Kṛṣṇa?’ Ramesvara replied; “The pure devotee is always in direct contact with the supersoul, the form of the Lord in the heart.” Prabhupāda said; “No, not like that, if I want to know what Kṛṣṇa wants, I just ask him.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu showed how a devotee sees Kṛṣṇa in a spiritual trance

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is described how Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu entered into a state of deep ecstatic, trance while being in the cowshed. The limb of the Lord’s body entered into the trunk just as the limbs of the tortoise are withdrawn in his shield. At that time Caitanya Mahāprabhu was in another state of consciousness and saw Kṛṣṇa directly.

“After hearing the vibration of a flute, I went to Vṛndāvana, and there I saw that Kṛṣṇa, the son of Mahārāja Nanda, was playing on His flute in the pasturing grounds. “ (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Antya* 17.23.) Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued to see the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa along with the *gopīs* and He was only brought back to external consciousness by the roaring chanting of the devotees. “Why have you brought me here”, He asked them.

Sanjaya could see Kṛṣṇa at Kuruksetra at a distances of hundred of kilometers through his mystic power

“By the mercy of Vyāsa [his spiritual master], I have heard these most confidential talks directly from the master of all mysticism, Kṛṣṇa, who was speaking personally to Arjuna.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.75)

The face of Kṛṣṇa and the hand of Kṛṣṇa

Some may see ‘the face’ of Kṛṣṇa and others may see ‘the hand’ of Kṛṣṇa. Some may see the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world and other may see how everything in this world goes on by the direction of the Lord. *Mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛti sūyate sa-carācaram* (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.10). Everything in this world is working under Kṛṣṇa’s direction. *Sutre mani gana iva* All that manifests are like pearls connected by the invisible thread, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *sthāvara-jaṅgama dekhe, nā dekhe tāra mūrti*. (Madhya 8.274) Wherever we look we don’t see the forms of things, but rather the Supreme Lord who is behind it all. In this way a Kṛṣṇa conscious person can answer the question, “Did you see Kṛṣṇa?”, in a positive way, “Yes, I am seeing Him all the time.”

II. Love of God in separation from Kṛṣṇa

Intensified remembrance of the Lord in separation

*ayi dīna-dayādra nātha he
mathurā-nātha kadāvalokyase
hṛdayam tvad-aloka-kātaram
dayita bhrāmyati kim karomy aham*

O My Lord! O most merciful master! O master of Mathurā! When shall I see You again? Because of My not seeing You, My agitated heart has become unsteady. O most beloved one, what shall I do now?

The uncontaminated devotees who strictly depend on the Vedānta philosophy are divided into four *sampradāyas*, or transcendental parties. Out of the four *sampradāyas*, the Śrī Madhvācārya-sampradāya was accepted by Mādhavendra Purī. Thus he took *sannyāsa* according to *paramparā*, the disciplic succession. Beginning from Madhvācārya down to the spiritual master of Mādhavendra Purī, the ācārya named Lakṣmīpati, there was no realization of devotional service in conjugal love. Śrī Mādhavendra Purī introduced the conception of conjugal love for the first time in the Madhvācārya-sampradāya, and this conclusion of the Madhvācārya-sampradāya was revealed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu when He toured southern India and met the Tattvavādīs, who supposedly belonged to the Madhvācārya-sampradāya.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa left Vṛndāvana and accepted the kingdom of Mathurā, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, out of ecstatic feelings of separation, expressed how Kṛṣṇa can be loved in separation. Thus devotional service in separation is central to this verse. Worship in separation is considered by the Gauḍīya-Madhva-sampradāya to be the topmost level of devotional service. According to this conception, the devotee thinks of himself as very poor and neglected by the Lord. Thus he addresses the Lord as *dīna-dayārdra nātha*, as did Mādhavendra Purī. Such an ecstatic feeling is the highest form of devotional service. Because Kṛṣṇa had gone to Mathurā, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī was very much affected, and She expressed Herself thus: “My dear Lord, because of Your separation My mind has become overly agitated. Now tell Me, what can I do? I am very poor and You are very merciful, so kindly have compassion upon Me and let Me know when I shall see You.” Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was always expressing the ecstatic emotions of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī that She exhibited when She saw Uddhava at Vṛndāvana. Similar feelings, experienced by Mādhavendra Purī, are expressed in this verse. Therefore, Vaiṣṇavas in the Gauḍīya-Madhva-sampradāya say that the ecstatic feelings experienced by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu during His appearance came from Śrī Mādhavendra Purī through Īśvara Purī. All the devotees in the line of the

Gauḍīya-Madhva-sampradāya accept these principles of devotional service.”
(*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya* 4.197)

The Lord with a Heart

Raso vai saḥ—He is the origin of all transcendental mellows. By seeing Kṛṣṇa we realize how wonderful the Supreme Lord and the entire spiritual world actually is. The most wonderful is that Kṛṣṇa has an active, personal relationship with all living beings.

[1.] *Absolute is sentient thou hast proved
impersonal calamity thou hast moved*

[2.] *sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyaṁ sādhuṇāṁ hṛdayaṁ tv aham
mad-anyat te na jānanti nāhaṁ tebhyo manāg api*

The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but Me, and I do not know anyone else but them.

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.4.68)

Grateful

Any person who is conscious of his friend’s beneficent activities and never forgets his service is called grateful. In the Mahābhārata, Kṛṣṇa says, “When I was away from Draupadī, she cried with the words, ‘He Govinda!’ This call for Me has put Me in her debt, and that indebtedness is gradually increasing in My heart!” This statement by Kṛṣṇa gives evidence of how one can please the Supreme Lord simply by addressing Him, “He Kṛṣṇa! He Govinda!”

The *mahā-mantra* (Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare) is also simply an address to the Lord and His energy. So to anyone who is constantly engaged in addressing the Lord and His energy, we can imagine how much the Supreme Lord is obliged. It is impossible for

the Lord to ever forget such a devotee. It is clearly stated in this verse that anyone who addresses the Lord immediately attracts the attention of the Lord, who always remains obliged to him.” (*Nectar of Devotion*, Ch. 21 ‘Qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, 17. Grateful)

The basis of False Faith

The Voice of the Soul

“The awakened soul says in effect to the mind and body, I am not identical with you. I do not want what you require. I have so long believed that I was identical with yourselves and that our interests were the same. But I now find that I am really and categorically different from you. I am made wholly of the principle of self-consciousness while both of you are made of dead matter. Being matter you can act and be acted upon by matter under the laws of nature. Nature makes and unmakes you, but she has no power over me. I am not benefited by your growth or harmed by your decay. You grow and decay by the laws that govern your relationship with this physical universe. Falsely identifying myself with you, I find myself compelled to suffer pain and pleasure due to physical vicissitudes that overtake you. I find myself unnaturally yoked to your functions such as eating, drinking, producing thought etc., etc. and am forced to believe them to be my own functions by which I am benefited. I shall of course have to stay with you as long as it is intended by Providence that I should suffer the consequences of this unnatural alliance with you. I shall permit you to do only what I consider to be necessary for my well being viz. getting back in to my natural position of free conscious existence unhampered by the unnatural domination by longing for material enjoyment. I refuse to be any more a slave of the sensuous inclinations of the mind and body.” (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, *Real and Apparent*)

Notes from the *Mādhurya Kādambinī* (Second Shower of Nectar)*Obstacles to the development of deeper faith*

There are two symptoms which begin to manifest as one has begun on the path of devotional service. The first is *kleśaghñī* (relief from all kinds of material distress) and the second is called *śubhadā* (beginning of all auspiciousness). There are five types of *kleśa* which are destroyed by *bhakti*:

1. **Avidyā**—ignorance; to falsely identify with or not to have the proper understanding or awareness of a situation.
2. **Asmitā**—false ego; to identify with the body or only to accept things which can be experienced on the gross level.
3. **Rāga**—attachment; the desire for material happiness and less suffering.
4. **Dveṣa**—hatred; aversion to unhappiness or the causes of unhappiness.
5. **Abhiniveśa**—one who is attached to sense enjoyment and is afraid that death will take it away.

From these arise the tendency for right or wrong actions, causing religion or irreligion, and thus sinful and pious activities.

Bhakti eradicates *kleśa* and simultaneously bestows *śubhadā* or auspiciousness which consists of such qualities as disinterest in material affairs, interest in the Supreme Lord, friendliness, mercy, forgiveness, truthfulness, simplicity, equanimity, fortitude, gravity, respectfulness, humility and being pleasing to all. There is a difference in the rate at which the undesirable qualities disappear and the auspicious qualities appear.

Bhakti develops gradually in specific stages. The first stage is called *śraddha* (faith) which is to have firm trust in scripture or to be enthusiastic to follow the activities of scripture (*sādhana*).

Faith may be of two types:

- A. *Svābhāvikī*—spontaneous
- B. *Baladutpadita*—aroused by forceful preaching

Faith then leads one to a spiritual master. By following the instructions of the guru one obtains association of realized devotees (*sādhū-saṅga*). Next comes *bhajana-kriyā* in which different types of devotional activities are practiced. This has two categories: 1. *aniṣṭhita*—unsteady; 2. *niṣṭhita*—steady.

Unsteady devotional service progresses in six stages:

1. **Utsāhamayī**—false confidence or one may be puffed up with enthusiasm.
2. **Ghana-taralā**—Sporadic endeavour; being sometimes diligent and other times negligent.
3. **Vyūḍha-vikalpā**—indecision (extensive speculation); the mind spends time pondering on whether to renounce or take to household life.
4. **Viṣaya-saṅgarā**—struggle with the senses or the inability to give up sense enjoyment.
5. **Niyamākṣamā**—inability to uphold vows which results in the inability to improve in one's devotional service.
6. **Taraṅga-raṅgaṇī**—enjoying the facilities offered by *bhakti*, i.e., material gain, worship, and position. These are weeds around the creeper of *bhakti*. Seeking pleasure (*raṅga*) in the weed-like facilities which are small waves (*taraṅga*) in the ocean of *bhakti*.

Atheism

What is the meaning of your atheism?

“Convince the atheist, whose mother has died, that there is a higher power, call it nature or death itself. Then you have to accept there is a higher power. So what does it mean you are an atheist?”—Jayādvaita Swami

Atheism in danger

“There are few people so stubborn in their atheism who when danger is pressing in will not acknowledge the divine power.”—Plato

Only a saint has such tolerance

“The divine is perhaps that quality in man which permits him to endure the lack of God”—Jean Rostand

Congratulations for the atheist

Upon meeting an atheist we will definitely congratulate him, because it is so rare to find a believer these days, someone with such strong faith. We will ask him, where does he get such a strong conviction, whereas others are doubtful and uncertain.

A pragmatic argument

“If truth is what works, as Pierce and the pragmatists insist, there must be a kind of truth in the *Bhagavad-Gita As-it-is*, since those who follow its teachings display a joyous serenity usually missing in the bleak and strident lives of contemporary people.”—Dr. Elwin H. Powell, Professor of Sociology, State University of New York.

In between Hiranyakaśipu and Prahlaḍa

To test us the Lord is residing behind the material world. *Adyāpi sei līlā kare guara rāya, kona kona bhāgyavān dekhībāra rāya*. Even today Lord Gaurāṅga is performing His pastimes, but only a few fortunate souls can see that. You are hearing the *kīrtana* through the books. Therefore you should not think that you are lacking in anything.

Once Hiranyakaśipu concluded that the Supreme Lord does not exist in this world. He tried in many ways to convince Prahlaḍa of this, and he presented many arguments against the Lord’s existence. But Śrī Nṛsiṃhadeva appeared from a pillar and Hiranyakaśipu and the whole world was benefited. The devotee sees the Lord everywhere and the non-devotee can not feel His presence anywhere. We are situated in the middle sometimes we show our attraction for devotional service the next moment we engage ourselves in material enjoyment. It is by the desire to serve

the Lord, that we can control the desire to enjoy the world. (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, letter, Śrī Caitanya Math, Śrī Māyāpur, December 22, 1927)

God is dead

1. “Hiraṇyakaśipu being an atheist thought this way. Because Lord Viṣṇu was not visible to Him, he thought that the Lord was dead. ‘I’ve searched the entire universe but I could not find Viṣṇu who has killed my brother.’” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.19.12, purp.)
2. “The current propaganda that “God is dead” is spread because people want to continue being rascals without restriction.” (*Elevation to Kṛṣṇa consciousness*, ‘Knowing Kṛṣṇa as He Is’)
3. “By His orders the sun is rising, the moon is rising, the water flows, and the ocean abides by the tide. Thus everything functions under His order. Since everything is going on very nicely, how can one realistically think that God is dead? If there is mismanagement, we may say that there is no government, but if there is good management, how can we say that there is no government? Just because people do not know God, they say that God is dead, that there is no God, or that God has no form. But we are firmly convinced that there is God and that Kṛṣṇa is God.” (*Science of Self-realisation*, ‘A Definition of God’)
4. “We human beings have our economic problem, but what economic problem is there in societies other than human society? The bird society has no economic problem. . . . So they have created problems—what to eat, where to sleep, how to mate, how to defend. These are a problem to us, but the majority of creatures—the aquatics, the fish, the plants, the insects, the birds, the beasts, and the many millions upon millions of other living creatures—do not have such a problem. . . . And who is providing their food and shelter? It is God. . . . God is supplying. The elephant eats hundreds of pounds of food. Who is supplying? . . .

So the process of acknowledging that God is supplying is better than thinking, ‘God is dead.’” (*The Science of Self-realisation*, ‘Knowing the Purpose of Life’)

5. “Devotee: Is it all right to disturb the mind of the envious?”

Prabhupāda: Envious?

Devotee: Yes so many people are so envious of God.

Prabhupāda: Everyone is envious. They have declared that God is dead. There is a proverb in Bengali, that one person wanted to see how many thieves are there in this village, and when he began to scrutinize he realized that everyone is a thief. Similarly, envious, you begin from President Johnson and go to anyone, they are all envious of God consciousness. You see? Otherwise in Los Angeles city, there are millions and trillions of people, and only a dozen people are coming here. You see? Why? They are envious. ‘What is this nonsense God consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness?’ You see?

So we have to disturb them. That is our duty. We have to disturb these envious persons, ‘Hare Kṛṣṇa!’ (*laughter*) That is our duty, to disturb them. And that is the greatest service. Just like a man is sleeping. And somebody is coming to kill him, and other friend, ‘Mr. such and such, wake up! Wake up! Wake up!’ So he may say, ‘Why you are disturbing me?’ But that is the greatest service, he’ll be saved. Māyā is coming to kill him, to send him to the darkest region of hell, and you are saving him, ‘Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and be saved.’” (*Bhagavad-gītā*, lecture, LA 30-12-68)

6. “Because we are speaking of God... Very... People are interested, ‘Oh, the Swamiji is speaking of God. God is dead.’ This is nonsense. You are living. ‘Everyone is living. Simply God has died.’ You see? This is, this philosophy is going on. Therefore *bhāgavata-dharma*, one has to study from the very beginning of life. Otherwise we shall learn this philosophy, that ‘God is dead.’ So Prahllāda Mahārāja says, *kaumāra acaret prajno dharmān bhāgavatan iha*.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, lecture 7.6.1 – San Francisco, March 3, 1967)

7. “There is a nice Bengali proverb, ‘Śakuni svape garu mare na’ *Śakuni* means the vulture. The vulture wants some dead carcass of animal, a cow especially. So for days together they do not get it, so it is cursing some cow, ‘You die.’ So does it mean that by his cursing the cow will die? Similarly, these vultures, *Śakuni*, they want to see God is dead. At least, they take pleasure, ‘Oh, now God is dead. I can do anything nonsense I like.’” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, lecture 7.9.12 – Montreal, August 18, 1968)

8. “But the nonsense, they will not do even this. They’ll say, “Oh, God is dead.” Therefore we are suffering. We are so ungrateful that we even do not give thanks. In the ordinary way, if somebody gives me a glass of water when I am thirsty—it is etiquette—I say, “Thank you.” And God has given us so vast mass of water in the ocean, in the sea, in the sky. Without water we cannot live. There is no thanksgiving. There is no thanksgiving. Rather, we say, “God is dead.” There are so much profuse light. For this electric light you are paying bill to the electric company, and God is supplying so much light, in the night there as moon, in the daytime as sun.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.12-13 — Montreal, August 20, 1968)

9. “So the people do not understand it, and they are declaring, ‘I am God. I don’t care for God. God is dead.’ How God is dead? You are under so much control, and how God is dead? You can say that there is no government, provided there is nobody to check you. But if you are in every step checked, how you can say that there is no government?” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.40 — Surat, December 21, 1970)

10. “. . . my Guru Mahārāja used to say this material world is a society of cheaters and cheated. That’s all. Combination of cheater and cheated. I want to be cheated because I don’t accept God. If there is God, then I become responsible for my sinful life. So therefore let me deny God: ‘There is no God,’ or ‘God is dead. Finish, finished.’” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.2 — London, August 16, 1971)

11. **God is dead:** “So in both the verses the Ajāmila is described as fool, rascal, and without sufficient Knowledge. Why? Because he’s attached to the child and he does not know that death is coming now. Death is there. This is our position. We say that “God is dead.” God is not dead. God is coming very soon. Wait a few years, he’ll be dead. This is the position. You rascal, God is not dead. God is coming to kick you, to kill you.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, lecture 6.1.27 – Honolulu, May 27, 1976)

12. “Encouragement to the dead souls in the western countries is to inform them that God is not dead. He is not only alive but also we can go and live with Him face to face. The *Bhagavad-gītā* gives us this specific information and one who goes there in the Kingdom of God would never come back to this miserable material world.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda, letter to: Dayananda, Nandarani, Uddhava – Delhi 20 September, 1967)

God the Supreme Controller

“. . . a man is sitting as controller in the control room, the subway trains. He, in his table, he has got everything ready: which train is running on which line, where it is, in which station it is now. So he has got switches and he’s controlling everything. Not only here, in India also they have now many (managed?). So they can say which train is where it is now. The light also moves according to the train moving. Similarly, if you can manufacture, if you can invent your own energies in different way, as the modern material civilization, they are discovering different manifestations of energy by machine, by electronics, and they are managing from one place, similarly, if it is, materially it is possible, why not spiritually? Spiritual is still finer.

So *parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrīyate*. He has got so many energies, subtle energies, that He appears to be doing nothing.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda, lecture on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 7.113-17 – San Francisco, February 22, 1967)

Doubt

Purity is the force

“Faith is made strong by being pure. For me purity consists of mediating on my faults (lust, envy, etc.) and not stirring up my doubts by meditating on them. To give attention to my faults, not to my doubts.”—Trivikrama Swami

De omnibus dubitandum est

“Doubt is everything”—Descartes.

Conclusion: There is no conclusion.

Skepticism

“If one regards oneself as a skeptic, it is well from time to time to be skeptical about one’s skepticism.”—Freud, *New Introductory lectures on Psycho-analysis*, xxx

Doubt as one of the characteristics of intelligence

“Doubt, misapprehension, correct apprehension, memory and sleep, as determined by their different functions, are said to be the distinct characteristics of intelligence.”
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.26.30)

Doubt is arising from ignorance

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Now hear, O son of Partha, how by practicing yoga in full consciousness of Me, with mind attached to Me, you can know Me in full, free from doubt.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.1)

“I shall now declare unto you in full this knowledge, both phenomenal and numinous. This being known, nothing further shall remain for you to know.”
(*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.2)

“Those who are on this path are resolute in purpose, and their aim is one. O beloved child of the Kurus, the intelligence of those who are irresolute is many-branched.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.41)

Belief and doubt

“I dreamt a thousand new paths, I woke up and walked the old one.”—Chinese proverb.

There is a tendency to go for the security of the *known*, which may have its good and bad sides, but at least for a known evil we may know a remedy or we have found a way to endure it. This the root-cause of narrow-mindedness, prejudice and the likes. The thought of new variety may be enticingly adventurous, but the risk of unexpected discomfort or worse a nightmare-scenario creates doubt. As children we carefully venture out in to the world making sure we remain in the close vicinity of our mother, and as we mature in to adulthood we extend our safe territory, to family, friends, society, money in the bank and such, which lends us the necessary self-assurance to face the world. When suddenly Kṛṣṇa consciousness emerges in the middle of our life it may be expected that there will some confusion at first. In that way doubt, reservations and introspection are all part of a natural growing process.

During the semester break I decided to take my experience with the devotees to another level and went to stay at the temple. I was not quite prepared for my experience and it was a bit overwhelming. I live an alternative lifestyle, trying to live as ethically as possible, but what I experienced at the temple was not just another religion, but another culture. It was culture-shock. The religious part was not a problem for me, I loved the time spend in the temple room chanting and dancing. What was hard for me were the little things: shoes off in certain areas, no eating or drinking in the kitchen, gender segregation, no toilet paper in the bathroom. I felt I could not handle all this so I left the temple earlier than I had planned; it was just too much for me to take at one time. I had a good experience though, and was glad I had gone to stay at the temple; for several days after my return I awoke chanting as I had at the temple.

I did not give up on the religion, and had the opportunity to go to the festival several weeks ago. I had been really exited before I left Stellenbosch, but upon

arrival at the temple I freaked out. What on earth was I doing? I hadn't felt like I fit in before so why was I coming back to torture myself more? Once the activities started however, I was nearly in ecstasy. The temple room full of devotees all worshipping Kṛṣṇa was amazing; I chanted, I sang, I danced with what little space was available among the crowd. The talk was exceptional and I was free for several days afterwards.

I am working on chanting on a continuous basis, I haven't so far had the drive to get up early every morning, but after a call from the temple the other day I am really going to work on it. I really want to reconnect with Kṛṣṇa, I want to be with God, for only God is with us always. Only Kṛṣṇa will never leave us, and only through Kṛṣṇa is everlasting bliss.

Bhaktin Deborah,
Environmental Science Student
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I appreciated the honest and straightforward account Deborah gave of her experiences in a newsletter and therefore I took the liberty of including her article here. I was remembering some of my own personal experiences. Like Deborah I was accepting the philosophical side, and I certainly had difficulties with the cultural differences, but my foremost doubt was about accepting the four regulative principles (To avoid entanglement in sinful life, “No fish, meat or eggs, no intoxication, no gambling and no illicit sex.”) and whether I really wanted to do that for the rest of my life.

Doubts in a positive sense can help us to achieve authenticity in our spiritual practices. However such type of doubts are not in the fundamental elements of the process; such as that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme, in the truth of scripture, or the holy name. In a spirit of positive doubt we may question our own commitment to the practices or our motivation, such type of doubt can be directed towards the individual or may be applied on a collective scale.

Section Three:

Faith in the Context of ISKCON

What are we really part off?

Recently I witnessed an interesting exchange, one boy had been living at the temple for a substantial amount of time, but at the same time he was still continuing his studies in some university. Someone asked him, “When did you actually join?” He replied; “I haven’t really joined yet!”

This raises indeed a number of interesting questions; What actually constitutes ‘joining’? And if we did join, then what did we join? And why did we join?

To the question, “What did we join?” I would think that the broadest definition of what we joined would be ‘the *saṅkīrtana* movement’. We could sum that up in the verse:

*harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

**For spiritual progress in this Age of Kali, there is no alternative,
there is no alternative, there is no alternative to the holy name,
the holy name, the holy name of the Lord.**

Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi 7.76

In other words, in the broadest sense anyone who takes up the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* would be considered a member of the *saṅkīrtana* movement. If this would be the broadest definition of ‘*joining*’, then looking at the contents of what we have just ‘joined’, it may be noted with some irony that it includes a

statement that many would consider *the* most narrow and sectarian namely; “There is no other way!”

If I progressively analyze what I have joined additionally, then I would say I have joined Prabhupāda. Some would claim to have joined ISKCON, but my claim is that I’ve joined Prabhupāda and that therefore I am a member of ISKCON. Then we can appreciate ISKCON as the dear creation of Śrīla Prabhupāda, a facility in the middle of the modern world to offer people a connection with the spiritual tradition of the Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya, containing the essence of devotional service and yet in it’s modern form the experiment of a religious movement.

When being questioned about the more excessive side of ISKCON, we might feel embarrassed to be identified in the public eye with; child-abuse and court cases, or with extreme books like “Monkey on a stick” or milder, “Betrayal of the Spirit”, exposés describing a dark history of misconduct by too many of the spiritual leaders, or otherwise some have lost their faith after having been confronted with whatever garbage may be out there on the web. However one cannot just condemn a movement based on teachings that are of the highest standard of purity, because of the misconduct of some, and amongst them even prominent, members. They may have been in prominent in terms of their material position, but in the spiritual sense, they were not prominent in spiritual realization but rather *sādhakas*—‘aspiring practitioners’—who like everyone else in the world fell pray to lust. Through observing such history one could learn many things, but it certainly doesn’t dismiss the validity of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Faith is meant to be Dynamic

Definition:

śraddhāvān jana haya bhakti-adhikārī

‘uttama’, ‘madhyama’, ‘kaniṣṭha’——*śraddhā-anusārī*

“A faithful devotee is a truly eligible candidate for the loving service of the Lord. According to one’s faith, one is classified as a topmost devotee, an intermediate devotee or an inferior devotee.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 22.64*)

Principle: As one is advancing in spiritual life one's *faith is growing*.

Definitions:

yo bhavet komala-śraddhaḥ sa kaniṣṭho nigadyate

“One whose faith is not very strong who is just beginning, should be considered a neophyte devotee.” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.19)

arcāyām eva haraye / pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate //

na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu /sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ

“A devotee who faithfully engages in the worship of the Deity in the temple but does not behave properly toward other devotees or people in general is called prakṛta bhakta, a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.47)

Principle:

A *kaniṣṭha adhikārī*, has weak faith is a materialistic devotee, who can not/ or does not want to follow *śāstra*, but accepts Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Definition:

yaḥ śāstrādiṣv anipuṇaḥ śraddhāvān sa tu madhyamaḥ

“He who does not know scriptural argument very well but who has firm faith is called an intermediate or second-class devotee.” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.18)

FOCUS		
<i>Kaniṣṭha</i>	<i>Madhyama</i>	<i>Uttama</i>
<i>Sambhanda</i>	<i>Abhideya</i>	<i>Prayojana</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • his priority is to become properly connected with the process. • it's difficult to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is making a very serious effort to become purified from <i>anarthas</i> • really wants to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is always absorbed in ecstatic loving devotional service • remembering Kṛṣṇa

Principle: Śrīla Prabhupāda said, that we must at least become *madhayama adhikārīs*.

ISKCON in three layers

I. The Organization
II. The Perfect Process
III. Lord Caitanya's Intervention

I. The 'Organization'

It may also be called the 'Society' or the 'Institution'. This part of ISKCON is its external form, it has *facilities* (the temples), *authority structure* (spiritual and managerial), *history* (glories and scandals), *facts and figures* (devotees made, books distributed, plates of *prasādam*, and the like).

Some have developed an extreme form of pessimism and have come to believe that ISKCON is dead.

Prabhupāda himself was more optimistic throughout thick and thin he remained it's well-wisher. He compared himself to Mother Yaśoda who would be fearful that something might happen to Kṛṣṇa although nothing could happen. Prabhupāda as the father of ISKCON, also an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, sometimes worried about his movement, although actually it cannot be harmed. (Danavir Gosvami)

II. The 'Perfect Process'

The real substance of this movement is its spiritual process, which is purely transcendental. No matter what happens, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa remains equally powerful.

One objection may be raised, "What about the risk of philosophical deviation that could corrupt everything?"

The Oil-spill

When some mammoth-oil-tanker spills oil in to the sea, the entire surface of the water in a large area gets covered by the black slick. It causes distress to so many living entities and many may die, especially those who are directly on, or just under the surface get the most affected. Although such an oil-spill is a big disaster, the sea has a self-purifying capacity and through the effect of waves and wind the oil is dumped on some beach.

In the same way a philosophical deviation may temporarily cover the truth, but the Absolute Truth will push away all confused ideas and their proponents.

However those animals that are living in the deep sea are not affected by the event. In the same way those who are deeply absorbed in the process of devotional service are not touched very much or not at all by such disruptions.

We have already introduced the concept of the *kaniṣṭha*- (neophyte), *madhyama*- (intermediate) and *uttama*- (topmost) *adhikārī*. The word *adhikārī* means authorization (authorization to enter in to Kṛṣṇa consciousness). The *kaniṣṭha* is known as *prākṛta-bhakta*, a materialistic devotee. one who is preoccupied with

prakṛti, the material energy, therefore such a devotee can not enter very deep in the spiritual process. He doesn't have much taste for it and therefore his attention will be drawn back to the 'Organizational' level, where all the latest ups-and-downs are the juice of the day. Because he remains only at the surface of the 'Perfect Process', he is susceptible to whatever may float on the top.

III. Lord Caitanya's Intervention

This is the deepest level of our movement, it is actually Lord Caitanya who is spreading the Holy Name to every town and village. This is the level where actual reality takes place. Who can see that the whole world is flooding in Love of Godhead, for many of us it remains still hidden. In construction water is one of the main problems in maintaining a building. There may be very fine, practically hairline cracks, but water will find its way and through seepage penetrate the entire building, yet on the outside one might never know.

Organized Religion

by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifest His eternal birth the pure cognitive essence of the serving soul who is located above all mundane limitations, King Kāṁsa is the typical aggressive empiricist, ever on the lookout for the appearance of the truth for the purpose of suppressing Him before He has time to develop. This is no exaggeration of the real connotation of the consistent empiric position. The materialist has a natural repugnance for the transcendent. He is disposed to link that faith in the incomprehensible is the parent of dogmatism and hypocrisy in the guise of religion. He is also equally under the delusion that there is no real dividing line between the material and the spiritual, he is strengthened in his delusion by the interpretation of scriptures by persons who are like-minded with himself. This includes all the lexicographic interpreters.

The lexicographical interpretation is upheld by Kaṁsa as the real scientific explanation of the scriptures, and is perfectly in keeping with his dread of and aversion for the transcendental. These lexicographical interpreters are employed by Kaṁsa in putting down the first suspected appearance of any genuine faith in the transcendental. King Kaṁsa knows very well that if the faith in the transcendental is once allowed to grow it is sure to upset all his empiric prospects.

There is historical ground for such misgivings. Accordingly if the empiric domination is to be preserved in tact it would be necessary not to lose a moment to put down the transcendental heresy the instant it threatens to make its appearance in earnest. King Kaṁsa, acting on this traditional fear is never slow to take the scientific precaution of deputing empiric teachers of the scriptures, backed by the resources of dictionary and grammar and all empiric subtleties to put down, by the show of specious arguments based on hypothetical principles, the true interpretation of the eternal religion revealed by the scriptures.

Kaṁsa is strongly persuaded that faith in the transcendental can be effectively put down by empiricism if prompt and decisive measures are adopted at the very outset. He attributes the failure of atheism in the past to the neglect of the adoption of such measures before the theistic fallacy has had time to spread among the fanatical masses.

But Kaṁsa is found to count without his host. When Kṛṣṇa is born He is found to be able to upset all sinister designs against those who are apprised by Himself of His advent. the apparently causeless faith displayed by persons irrespective of age, sex and condition may confound all rabid empiricist who are on principle adverse to the Absolute Truth Whose appearance is utterly incompatible with the domination of empiricism.

But no adverse efforts of the empiricists, whose rule seems till then to be perfectly well-established over the minds of the deluded souls of this world can dissuade any person from exclusively in following the Truth when He actually manifests His birth in the pure cognitive essence of the soul.

Pūtanā is the slayer of all infants. The baby, when he or she comes out of the mother's womb, falls at once into the hands of the pseudo-teachers of religion. These teachers are successful in forestalling the attempts of the good preceptor whose help is never sought by the atheists of this world at the baptisms of their babies. This is ensured by the arrangements of all established churches of the world. They have been successful only in supplying watchful Pūtanās for effecting the spiritual destruction of persons from the moment of their birth with the cooperation of their worldly parents. No human contrivance can prevent these Pūtanās from obtaining possession of the pulpits. This is due to the general prevalence of atheistic disposition in the people of this world.

The church that has the best chance of survival in this damned world is that of atheism under the convenient guise of theism. The churches have always proved the staunchest upholders of the grossest form of worldliness from which even the worst of non-ecclesiastical criminals are found to recoil.

It is not from any deliberate opposition to the ordained clergy that these observations are made. **The original purpose of the established churches of the world may not always be objectionable. But no stable religious arrangement for instructing the masses has yet been successful. The Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in pursuance of the teachings of the scriptures enjoins all absence of conventionalism for the teachers of the eternal religion. It does not follow that the mechanical adoption of the unconventional life by any person will make him a fit teacher of religion.** Regulation is necessary for controlling the inherent worldliness of conditional souls.

But no mechanical regulation has any value, even for such a purpose. The bona-fide teacher of religion is neither any product of nor the favourer of, any mechanical system. In his hands no system has likewise, the chance of degenerating into a lifeless arrangement. The mere pursuit of fixed doctrines and fixed liturgies cannot hold a person to the true spirit of doctrine or liturgy.

The idea of an organised church in an intelligible form, indeed, marks the close of the living spiritual movement. The great ecclesiastical

establishments are the dikes and the dams to retain the current that cannot be held by any such contrivances. They, indeed, indicate a desire on the part of the masses to exploit a spiritual movement for their own purpose.

They also unmistakably indicate the end of the absolute and unconventional guidance of the bona-fide spiritual teacher. The people of this world understand preventive systems, they have no idea at all of the unprevented positive eternal life. Neither can there be any earthy contrivance for the permanent preservation of the life eternal on this mundane plane on the popular scale.

Those are, therefore, greatly mistaken who are disposed to look forward to the amelioration of the worldly state in any worldly sense from the worldly success of any really spiritual movement. It is these worldly expectants who become the patrons of the mischievous race of the pseudo-teachers of religion, the Pūtanās, whose congenial function is to stifle the theistic disposition at the very moment of its suspected appearance. But the real theistic disposition can never be stifled by the efforts of those Pūtanās. The Pūtanās have power only over the atheist. It is a thankless but salutary task which they perform for the benefit of their unwilling victims.

But as soon as theistic disposition proper makes its appearance in the pure cognitive essence, of the awakened soul, the Pūtanās are decisively silenced at the very earliest stage of their encounter with new-born Kṛṣṇa. The would-be slayer is herself slain. This is the reward of the negative services that the Pūtanās unwittingly render to the cause of theism by strangling all hypocritical demonstrations against their own hypocrisy.

But Pūtanā does not at all like to receive her reward in only form which involves the total destruction of her wrong personality. King Kāṁsa also does not like to lose the services of the most trusted of his agents. The effective silencing of the whole race of pseudo-teachers of religion is the first clear indication of the appearance of the Absolute on the mundane plane. **The bona-fide teacher of the Absolute, heralds the Advent of Kṛṣṇa by his uncompromising campaign against the pseudo-teachers of religion.**” (Excerpted from the essay *Pūtanā* printed in the January 1932 edition of *The Harmonist*, or Sree Sajjanatoshani)

Via Negativa – Via Positiva

Excerpt from the virtue of Abstinence

“Nonetheless while scientific research currently acknowledges the advantage of adopting certain ascetical practices, it was clearly the religious traditions of the world that initially propagated the wisdom of selective self-denial. Especially regarding sex. It is good to be chaste, to be continent, i.e., to exhibit self-restraint or moderation. In the West, such practices are identified with the early church fathers, who were often extreme in their pronouncements against sex. St. Jerome referred to sex as “unclean”, while Tertullian called it “shameful” and St. Ambrose “a defilement.” Augustine found it “particularly disturbing that Christians would exhibit such a lack of self-control,” and Aquinas felt that he “would rather run through the streets naked than give in to the lust associated with sexual activity.” The views of these notable Christians can be traced to the Bible. The temptation and fall of Adam and Eve was the first indication that sex was a thing to be reckoned with. Augustine was the first to relate the original sin with sexuality, and by the time of Paul, it was “better to marry than to burn”—but better to remain celibate altogether. This ascetic worldview gained a stronghold in the early Church, and was not only supported by the Church fathers, as already noted, but also by less known groups such as Cathars (“the Pure Ones”), an important Medieval Christian sect that stressed sexual abstinence. This view, characteristic of mainstream Christianity, is known as *via negativa*, and has traditionally been counterbalanced by a more Platonic/Franciscan centered doctrine, referred to as *via positiva*.”

Via Negativa Versus Via Positiva

“*Via Negativa* has been called the “fall/redemption” tradition. Its adherents hold that man and his world are inherently evil and that we need to take drastic measures to purify ourselves. Thhomas a Kempis, a strong supporter of this doctrine, put it bluntly: “Every time I go into creation, I withdraw from God.” That is the basic idea—the creationb is bad, harmful, distracting, and therefore one must remove oneself from it, rather than become immersed in it. *Via Positiva*, on the other hand, has

come to be known as a “creation-centered” spirituality. Modern theologians, such as Matthew Fox, have articulated the virtues of this world-affirming view of life as opposed to the more world-denying view. Nature is beautiful, the doctrine preaches, and the body, as part of nature, is beautiful as well. Things of this world are to be embraced, not shunned; enjoyed, not dismissed.

This view has notable merit, and was endorsed in the Christian tradition by such masters as Meister Eckhart, St. Irenaeus, St. Benedict, and “the love mystics”-luminaries like St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Hildegard of Bingen, John of the Cross, and Teresa of Avila, among others, who saw themselves related to Christ through bridal imagery. The *via positiva*, however, also has certain obvious limitations, of which the great Christian mystics were aware. One cannot hope to advance spiritually if one hedonistically embraces the joys of this world, an inherent danger when one sees the world in a positive light. If one becomes the slave of the body, how can he rejoice in the spirit? . . .

Both *via negativa* and *via positiva*, however, can be supported by biblical passages, and so contemporary theologians with a view towards pragmatism have opined that a merger of the two is probably the most appropriate worldview for believing Christians. And there is good sense in this. As Matthew Fox has written: “The *via positiva* is cheapened without the *via negativa*, and the *via negativa* without the *via positiva* becomes sick asceticism, more power-as-control instead of less in the universe.” (From: Satyaraja Dasa, *The four principles of Freedom*)

Material Arguments for the success of ISKCON

By Harvey Cox and Larry D. Shinn

Religious movement in a foreign culture

When a religious movement moves into a foreign culture frequently the intensity of the devotion of that movement becomes more noticeable and more attractive- in part because the people who are going to make the long journey to another part of the world to present their tradition are people generally of a higher degree of

commitment to it than people living back in the homeland, and also the new recruits to that movement will display, as new recruits do, a lot of enthusiasm.

Dilution of a tradition and revitalization

When a religious movement has been around for a long time, especially three, four, ten, twenty, thirty generations, it tends to a large extent to have made significant compromises with the dominant culture. Even though for time to time they may have internal renewal or revitalization movements, still, there is a certain kind of cultural accommodation which dilutes the power of tradition.

The cultural standpoint

“Now, all this is one reason—looking at it from a cultural standpoint—why your movement is attractive to many in the West. But this dynamic has happened in the other direction also, from West to East. . . . There have for instance been many Hindu converts to Christianity in Japan in the latter part of the 19th century. The Jesuits who traveled to China in the sixteenth century were viewed by the Chinese as some kind of fantastic incarnations of wisdom and piety and they immediately became mandarins and advisors to the Emperor. There were even strong possibilities that many Chinese would have been Christians except that the Pope at the time thought that the Jesuits were making too many compromises with Chinese culture- not with material things but with wearing mandarin robes and integrating the Christian theology with Chinese philosophy and so on- and so he called them home and didn’t allow them to pursue that course.” (In: *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa*, p. 58-9)

Sociological reasons

“Most people who join the movement were vegetarians before they joined—far more than 50%, some for many years. And what is significant is that the theology provides a rationalization for that. So, it’s not that someone joins the movement

because they want to become vegetarian or are convinced of vegetarianism by the philosophy. It is that they are already largely vegetarians, some knowing why, some not quite sure why. Some just didn't like meat. There were four or five instances of this in my interviews, where devotees indicated that they simply didn't like meat and refused to eat it as a child, some would even throw up when they ate it. And so they became vegetarians almost out of physical necessity. But the theology provided an avenue for them to express this particular life choice they had already made and to make sense of it." (In: *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa*, p.65)

Prabhupāda's arguments

"Especially the youth of the world are taking very serious interest, because they are not at all satisfied with the standards of happiness their parents have accepted. Neither their teachers, parents, nor anyone can offer them the solution to what this human form of life is meant for." (Letter to: Jagadisa -- Bombay 5 January, 1972)

Kṛṣṇa arranged for Prabhupāda's sake

"When I was alone in your New York, I was thinking, who will listen to me in this horrible, sinful place? All right, I shall stay little longer, at least I can distribute a few of my books, that is something. But Kṛṣṇa was all along preparing something I could not see, and He brought you to me one by one, sincere American boys and girls, to be trained-up for doing the work of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Now I can see that it is a miracle. Otherwise, your city of New York, one single old man, with only a few books to sell for barely getting eatables, how he can survive, what to speak of introducing God-consciousness movement for saving the humankind? That is Kṛṣṇa's miracle. Now I can see it." (Letter to: Sudama -- Bombay 23 December, 1972)

**Bhagavad Gita also recognizes material reasons
for some to take up spiritual life**

*catur-vidhā bhajante mām
janāḥ sukrīno 'rjuna
ārto jijñāsur arthārthī
jñānī ca bharataṛsabha*

O best among the Bhāratas, four kinds of pious men begin to render devotional service unto Me—the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute.

Bhagavad-gītā 7.16

**What import does this movement actually
have in the world?**

Why are there so few devotees?

Q.: How many are there who know of Vaisnavism? (or why so few take to it)

A.: How many postgraduates are being turned out? How many Newtons have been born? Is it a wise principle to give up the culture of science, because many professor J.C. Boses are not being produced. (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta, *Lord Caitanya's teachings*, Colloquium with Foreigners)

Can we actually change the world?

The relevant issue is not whether this movement attracts the people or not, it attracts Kṛṣṇa and He can move mountains.

Garuda came to help the sparrow

“A sparrow laid her eggs on the shore of the ocean, but the big ocean carried away the eggs on its waves. The sparrow became very upset and asked the ocean to return her eggs. The ocean did not even consider her appeal. So the sparrow decided to dry up the ocean. She began to pick out the water in her small beak, and everyone laughed at her for her impossible determination. The news of her activity spread, and at last Garuḍa, the gigantic bird carrier of Lord Viṣṇu, heard it. He became compassionate toward his small sister bird, and so he came to see the sparrow. Garuḍa was very pleased by the determination of the small sparrow, and he promised to help. Thus Garuḍa at once asked the ocean to return her eggs lest he himself take up the work of the sparrow. The ocean was frightened at this, and returned the eggs. Thus the sparrow became happy by the grace of Garuḍa.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.24)

We may not be able to change the world, but the books can.

“On the other hand, that literature which is full of descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, forms, pastimes, etc., of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a different creation, full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world’s misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though imperfectly composed, are heard, sung and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11)

This movement is changing the world

We are the living proof of it!

Section Four:

Faith—Dialogue

Faith on common ground with disbelief

There are three points which both believers as nonbelievers can readily agree on:

1. Primacy of consciousness
2. Language as a vehicle of thought
3. Human beings are by nature idealists

1. Primacy of Consciousness

Before being able to discuss, understand, or perceive anything, first of all consciousness has to be there. Consciousness is indeed the foundation of all our experience. Thus, regardless of what one's philosophical or religious persuasion is, one has to admit that every worldview, theory, thought, etc., has its origin in and effect on consciousness. Even if one considers consciousness as an epiphenomenon of matter, still such materialistic or mechanistic theories originate, "take place", within consciousness. Hence, the debate should center on what consciousness is, not on whether or not it exists. Thereafter thorough and rigorous research should lead to a confirmation of one side or the other (i.e., the religious or materialistic/mechanistic side).

2. Language as a vehicle of thought

To convey the contents of our consciousness we have to make use of language. These words (or signs) come automatically. It is not that we have to overly exert ourselves to fit ideas into words, the words come naturally and they express our thoughts. Thus, words are an aspect of consciousness, something which is very fundamental for our understanding and transmission of knowledge. This leads to the cognitive value

religious language (and metaphors) may have, something about which Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Maharaja writes:

One might ask.. . by which rules must religion play? Will scientists play by any other rules than their own? And if not, who has made the arbitrary judgment that their rules are superior to any others? Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas, has set for itself such an exhaustive system of rules that to master its grammar alone, it is said, takes twelve years. Analysis of the cognitive value of Vedic discourse is certainly possible, but one should do it according to the “rules of the game.” One must prepare himself by spiritual discipline, and take great pains to ensure the purity of one’s consciousness while proceeding with one’s studies. (Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami. (1997). *Religious Language*. In: “Reason & Belief—Problem Solving in the Philosophy of Religion.” Texas: Pundits Press, p. 49.

3. Human Beings are by Nature Idealists

In the present context “Idealism” should not be understood as an antonym of Realism. “Idealism” here refers to the tendency seen in every human endeavour to attain some ideal of perfection. This tendency seems to be the distinctive trait of human beings in comparison to animals.

The notion of perfection may be manifold (political ideas of perfection, philosophical/religious ideals of perfection, etc.), but fact is that human beings are by nature not satisfied with the status quo of things in nature. Humans encounter the problems inherent to material nature, i.e., birth, death, old age, and disease, and invest much intellectual power in actually solving those problems. Hence, Idealism means that one makes an endeavour to change things for the better (the ideal of perfection). Interestingly, it is seen that Western science actually strives for spiritual goals, namely eternal life (*sat*) by medical science, increase of knowledge (*cit*) by education, and the attainment of happiness (*ānanda*) by providing society with newer and newer inventions and comforts.

Especially point no. 3 (Human beings are by nature idealists) is relevant to the discussion on faith, for one inevitably puts one’s faith in a particular ideal of perfection if one want to attain anything at all. Only until this faith exists will one

have the requisite vigour and determination to pursue one's particular ideal of perfection till its attainment.

Now, this ideal of perfection may have been more or less independently acquired or may have been instilled by authority (i.e., family, friends, tradition, culture, education, etc.). I mention this to indicate how important association is for faith development and sustainment.

For devotees this means: *asat-saṅga-tyāga,—ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra*. Association with “*asat* persons” will first of all weaken our faith in the Kṛṣṇa conscious ideals of perfection (i.e., self-realization, *kṛṣṇa-prema*); second, it will persuade us to adopt another set of ideals (i.e., sense gratification); and third, it will stir our faith more and more to attain the newly acquired ideals. (The conversion of a materialist to a spiritualist follows the same methodology, but in the opposite way.) Conversely, for an aspiring and practicing devotee association with “*sat* persons” (i.e., devotees) will first of all refine or fine-tune our discrimination of what is conducive for attaining the Kṛṣṇa conscious set of ideals of perfection and what our endeavours of worship should be targetted on. This refers to the development of a one-pointed intelligence (cf. *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.41) which is able to discern the ultimate worthy Personality of Worship, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and which ensures the proper placement of faith in that ultimate ideal. Secondly, it will enhance our faith in the Kṛṣṇa conscious ideals—it will stir our faith more and more to ever expand our Kṛṣṇa conscious efforts (i.e., service and service attitude).

The instructions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* are first of all an appeal to the intellect of mankind to replace its set of ideals from the material to the spiritual realm, and to come to an understanding of the worthy object of love and faith. Thus, the *Bhagavad-gītā* tries to guide us to finally come to a voluntarily surrender of heart to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, a surrender which manifests itself in devotional service unto Him.

Apauruṣeya—Divine Revelation

Considerations of an Absolute Truth, sometimes critiqued as Fundamentalism, Dogmatism, opposed to the need for authenticity and honesty in belief in an individual's attempt to make a connection with the Supreme Lord.

The Absolute Truth

We accept the Vaiṣṇava scriptures as divine revelations directly coming from Kṛṣṇa and not as the product of man at a particular time, place and circumstance.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī establishes this point in the *Tattva-sandarbha, annucheda* 9, 10, 11 & 12. He lists 10 different types of evidence that are traditionally accepted; philosophy, comparison, non-existence, inclusion, tradition, gesture, direct perception, inference, revealed knowledge ¹ and he points out the limitations of the first 9 and then establishes *śabda* or revealed knowledge i.e., the Veda as an absolute, infallible source of knowledge.

The Veda was originally revealed by the Supreme Lord to Lord Brahma, *tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.1) The Veda is the source of all knowledge, gradually with time various distortions manifested itself as the different cultures and languages of the world.

Jīva Gosvāmī offers some quotes from Vedic literature itself

1. Reasoning has no sure basis (it cannot refute the conclusion of the Veda). (*Brahma-sūtra* 2.1.11)
2. One should not apply reasoning to understand what is inconceivable. (*Mahābhārata Bhīṣma-parva* 5.22)
3. Scriptures are the source of knowledge of the Absolute Truth. (Brahma Sutra 1.1.3)
4. This is confirmed by the Vedas, because they are the source of knowledge of the Absolute Truth. (*Brahma-sūtra* 2.1.27)
5. Supreme Lord, Your Veda is the supreme eye for the forefathers, demigods, and human beings. By it they can understand Your form and qualities, along with the highest goal of life and the means to attain it, none of which can be ascertained otherwise. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.4)

¹ The complete explanation from Jīva Gosvāmī is included as an appendix.

The complete text of the Vedas is unavailable

But at present the complete text of the Vedas is unavailable and owing to a decrease in human memory, it is difficult to study the whole body of the Vedas. All in all, the Vedas consist of 1,130 *Saṁhitas*, 1,130 *Brāhmaṇas*, 1,130 *Āraṇyakas*, and 1,130 *Upaniṣads*, a total of 4,520 titles. By the influence of time, however, many texts have been lost. At present only about 11 *Saṁhitas*, 18 *Brāhmaṇas*, 7 *Āraṇyakas*, and 220 *Upaniṣads* are available. This is less than 6% of the original Vedas.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the spotless Purāṇa

Oneness of the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* with the *R̥g* and other Vedas, with respect to their *apauruṣeya* nature, is indicated in the *Mādhyandina-śruti*, “My dear Maitreyi, the *R̥g*, *Yajur*, *Sama*, and *Atharva Veda*, *Itihasas* and *Purāṇas*.. are manifest from the breath of the Supreme Lord” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka* 2.4.10). Therefore it is recommended to study the *Purāṇas*, especially *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The Vaiṣṇava perspective versus other views

Outside observers may not be able to appreciate this point. For example mundane scholars view Kṛṣṇa consciousness as a religious tradition, which in an ongoing evolution over time has developed in a particular environment.

So tradition isn't how it began but how it went on. It's more the stream than the source. Indeed that is its purpose: the source is there to form a stream. Hence the call to return to the source says less than we usually think. To return to the source involves swimming against the stream, and that's difficult, if not impossible. And it doesn't make sense to begin with the stream. Not everything that got into the stream came from the source, and –conversely—not everything that came from the source can still be found in the stream. (H.M. Kuitert, *I have my doubts*)

More orthodox practitioners of a particular faith may rather accept their own scriptures Christian believers may refer to the Bible, Matt. 14:6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me.”

The Kṛṣṇa conscious point of view excepts that the scriptures of the major world religions are bona fide and revealed by God, however somewhere in the process of recording the message some imperfections entered.

In a discussion mentioned in the Caitanya Caritamṛta that took place between Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Chand Kazi, Lord Caitanya said,

There are many mistakes and illusions in your scriptures. Their compilers, not knowing the essence of knowledge, gave orders that were against reason and argument.” *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi* 17.168

After hearing these statements by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Kazi, his arguments stunned, could not put forward any more words. Thus, after due consideration, the Kazi accepted defeat and spoke as follows, “My dear Nīmāi Paṇḍita, what You have said is all true. Our scriptures have developed only recently, and they are certainly not logical and philosophical.

PURPORT

The *śāstras* of the *yavanas*, or meat-eaters, are not eternal scriptures. They have been fashioned recently, and sometimes they contradict one another. The scriptures of the *yavanas* are three: the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Koran. Their compilation has a history; they are not eternal like the Vedic knowledge. Therefore although they have their arguments and reasonings, they are not very sound and transcendental. As such, modern people advanced in science and philosophy deem these scriptures unacceptable.” *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi* 17.169

Prof. H. M. Kuitert in his book *I Have My Doubts—how to become a Christian without being a fundamentalist* is expressing his difficulties with the idea of divine revelation. In the introduction he states that his aim is. “To make a personal statement. Not to ask ‘What must I believe?’, but ‘What do I really believe?’.” Kuitert is looking for authenticity in his belief, he sees religion as the attempt of men to reach upwards toward God. He writes; “Of course we don’t have God’s standpoint. Those who present themselves to society like this damage faith in at least two ways. A church which talks about human beings and the world ‘from above’, as it were from God, ultimately makes church doctrine seem very alienating. Ordinary people don’t look at things from God’s perspective; the real way is from below upwards,

from the question to the answer, from people who seek to the God who is found. If doctrine were no longer constructed from above but ‘from below’, it would look very different: much more human.

Kuitert also points out the difficulties for ‘Interfaith dialogue’, “Far less must we adopt the approach that the God of revelation and so-called natural knowledge of God are different things. That means claiming revelation for Christian truth and denying it to the other religions. And as I’ve just commented, it removes the basis for a dialogue, this time from a pre-existing sense of superiority.”

The devotees see Kṛṣṇa, as the Supreme Lord who has a heart. Who cares for all His children. In *Bhagavad-gītā* 5.29 Kṛṣṇa declares Himself to be *suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānām*, the friend of all living beings. In the Nectar of devotion it is mentioned that Kṛṣṇa speaks the language of all living beings, this is further proof that Kṛṣṇa is the well-wisher of all. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we find the verse:

*sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyam
sādhūnām hṛdayaṁ tv aham
mad-anyat te na jānanti
nāhaṁ tebhyo manāg api*

The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but Me, and I do not know anyone else but them.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.4.68

So what is the difficulty with the concept of “divine revelation”? Can the Lord not reach out to the conditioned souls? The loving father is always thinking about his lost children and he takes initiative in trying to bring them back home. All the major traditions of the world claim to be ‘divine revelations’. Why would Kṛṣṇa not take some initiative? Everything that exists is going on by His will, everything is His energy, that is all His ‘divine arrangement’.

That we as human beings can never perceive reality from God's perspective is true, we are limited living beings and He is the omniscient Lord. But we can learn from the Lord's teachings and get more insight, and the more we adjust our lives according to His directions the more of His teachings we will realize in our heart. In other words the devotee goes beyond 'parroting' prayers, and his faith grows by experiencing the truth of the scriptures through the satisfaction that he gains from applying the knowledge. In this way his faith is genuine and authentic from his own heart and some artificially, imposed type of fanaticism or sentimentalism.

As far as Kṛṣṇa consciousness preaching from a superior platform, which would obstruct open dialogue with other types of faith, Prabhupāda used to stress the point that true religious principles should lead to Love of God, which must translate in to some practical, selfless service to Him, without expecting any return.

Not this or that type of religious ritual to obtain divine blessing for a comfortable material situation. The point is that, all of us agree that life in the material world is a very temporary situation and that on the other hand the after life is eternal. Then which of the two is more important?. He whose sole interest is the pleasure of the Lord and who is fully dedicated in loving, devotional service is the eligible candidate to attain and have the direct experience of the existence of the eternal abode of Kṛṣṇa, which is full of bliss and knowledge.

Some Controversial Points

By dwelling again and again on controversy we may assign certain 'points' more importance than they actually have in the bigger picture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and we may neglect the more fundamental elements of the philosophy.

A. Fundamental issues

Nonetheless some doubts may be raised about the very fundamental points themselves.

1. Acintya—Inconceivable

Mundane argument inadequate

*acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā
na tāms tarkeṇa yojayet
prakṛtibhyaḥ paraṁ yac ca
tad acintyasya lakṣaṇam*

Anything transcendental to material nature is called inconceivable, whereas arguments are all mundane. Since mundane arguments cannot touch transcendental subject matters, one should not try to understand transcendental subjects through mundane arguments.

Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi 17.308

Speculation

Six blind men encountered an elephant for the first time in their life. One was touching a leg and said, “An elephant is like tree.” Another was holding the tail and disagreed; “No an elephant is like a rope.” A third one touched the trunk and thought the elephant was like a snake and so on. According to the part of the body they were in contact with, they developed a certain idea about what an elephant actually is.

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya became dull by logic

*tarka-śāstre jaḍa āmi, yaiche lauha-piṇḍa
āmā dravāile tumi, pratāpa pracaṇḍa'*

I had become dull-headed due to reading too many books on logic. Consequently I had become like an iron bar. Nonetheless, You have melted me, and therefore Your influence is very great.

Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 6.214

Logic applied to Lord Caitanya's mercy

śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-dayā karaha vicāra
vicāra karite citte pābe camatkāra

SYNONYMS

śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya—Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu; *dayā*—His mercy; *karaha*—just put into; *vicāra*—consideration; *vicāra*—when such consideration; *karite*—will be done by you; *citte*—in your heart; *pābe*—you will get; *camatkāra*—striking wonder.

TRANSLATION

If you are indeed interested in logic and argument, kindly apply it to the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. If you do so, you will find it to be strikingly wonderful.

Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi 8.15

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura comments in this connection that people in general, in their narrow-minded conception of life, create many different types of humanitarian activities, but the humanitarian activities inaugurated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are different.

Let the logicians compare all the results of other humanitarian work with the merciful activities of Lord Caitanya. If their judgment is impartial, they will understand that no other humanitarian activities can surpass those of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Everyone is engaged in humanitarian activities on the basis of the body, but from the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.18) we understand, *anta-vanta ime dehā nityasyoktāḥ śarīrīṇaḥ*: “The material body is ultimately subject to destruction, whereas the spiritual soul is eternal.” Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s philanthropic activities are performed in connection with the eternal soul. However one tries to benefit the body, it will be destroyed, and one will have to accept another body according to

his present activities. If one does not, therefore, understand this science of transmigration but considers the body to be all in all, his intelligence is not very advanced. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, without neglecting the necessities of the body, imparted spiritual advancement to purify the existential condition of humanity. Therefore if a logician makes his judgment impartially, he will surely find that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the *mahā-vadānyāvatāra*, the most magnanimous incarnation. He is even more magnanimous than Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Lord Kṛṣṇa demanded that one surrender unto Him, but He did not distribute love of Godhead as magnanimously as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Therefore Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī offers Lord Caitanya his respectful obeisances with the words *namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te/ kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*.

2. The only way

Dogmatic, sectarian?

*harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

‘For spiritual progress in this Age of Kali, there is no alternative, there is no alternative, there is no alternative to the holy name, the holy name, the holy name of the Lord.’

Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi 7.76

Academics and others consider such a statement dogmatic, because it establishes one truth at the exclusion of all others with no option for dialogue. Prabhupāda however considers them dogmatic, because they don’t know God, yet insist that religion must adhere to their definitions.

3. Sastra is a Divine Revelation

Academics will see Kṛṣṇa consciousness as a particular religious belief which developed in a particular historical and cultural context.

B. Specific issues

4. No Overpopulation

We get this historical event from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, that during the time of Mahārāja Pṛthu there was scarcity of food, so the King wanted to punish the earthly deity, because she was not supplying food. He wanted to kill her. But the earthly deity replied, that she has reduced the supply of food because she did not like to supply the demons. So there is no question of overpopulation, it is a question of demons. The number of demons has increased and therefore by nature that supply is minimized. (Letter to: Sir Alistair Hardy—Bhaktivedanta Manor 28 July, 1973)

5. They did not go to the moon

Prabhupāda: But we say on the authenticity of the description in the Vedic literature. Therefore it is authentic. This proves that they did not go to the moon planet. If it is above, 1,600,000 above, then it is impossible. So this is bogus propaganda, they have gone to the moon.

Pusta Kṛṣṇa: It's a very reasonable proposition because going to the moon, they simply come back with some rocks. Rocks they can get on the earth also.

Prabhupāda: They are all nonsense. Some sand and some rocks, and we have to believe they have gone to. The fools may believe, but we cannot believe. We have got other information. Why shall I believe? (Durban Oct 9, 1975)

6. One solar system

This material manifestation of universes, here also there are innumerable universes. The one universe we are seeing or one solar system we are seeing, but there are

innumerable solar systems. That is admitted by modern science also. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lect 7.7.30-31—Mombassa, September 12, 1971)

7. Women less intelligent

Devahuti is lamenting her position. As a woman, she had to love someone. Somehow or other, she came to love Kardama Muni, but without knowing of his spiritual advancement. Kardama Muni could understand Devahūti's heart; generally all women desire material enjoyment. They are called less intelligent because they are mostly prone to material enjoyment. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.23.54)

8. Sacred Cow

In India, the cow is considered sacred not because Indian people are primitive worshipers of mythological totems but because Hindus intelligently understand that the cow is a mother. As children, nearly all of us were nourished with cow's milk, and therefore the cow is one of our mothers. Certainly one's mother is sacred, and therefore we should not kill the sacred cow. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.3.36)

9. Life comes from life

Dr. Wolf-Rottkay: But in all humility, suppose the scientists actually succeed in artificially creating a living cell. What would you say?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: What would be their credit? They would only be imitating what already exists in nature. People are very fond of imitations. If a man in a nightclub imitates a dog, people will go and pay money to watch him. But when they see a real dog barking they don't pay any attention to it. (*Life Comes From Life*, p. 82)

10. Satī

Gāndhārī was an ideal chaste lady, a life companion of her husband, and therefore when she saw her husband burning in the fire of mystic yoga along with his cottage of leaves, she despaired. She left home after losing her one hundred sons, and in the

forest she saw that her most beloved husband was also burning. Now she actually felt alone, and therefore she entered the fire of her husband and followed her husband to death. This entering of a chaste lady into the fire of her dead husband is called the *satī* rite, and the action is considered to be most perfect for a woman. In a later age, this *satī* rite became an obnoxious criminal affair because the ceremony was forced upon even an unwilling woman. In this fallen age it is not possible for any lady to follow the *satī* rite as chastely as it was done by Gāndhārī and others in past ages. A chaste wife like Gāndhārī would feel the separation of her husband to be more burning than actual fire. Such a lady can observe the *satī* rite voluntarily, and there is no criminal force by anyone. When the rite became a formality only and force was applied upon a lady to follow the principle, actually it became criminal, and therefore the ceremony was to be stopped by state law. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.13.58)

Mundane forms of religion

An explanation given by Śrīla Prabhupāda, from the Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 20.132-135.

Now, the astrologer is supposed to give some instruction to the poor man.

*‘ei sthāne āche dhana’—yadi dakṣiṇe khudibe
‘bhīmarūla-barulī’ uṭhibe, dhana nā pāibe*

Now, the astrologer says, is giving him, it is figurative, that “If you want to search out the Absolute Truth by ritualistic method...” Mostly people are attached to the particular faith and its ritualistic method. They consider this is everything. *Veda-vāda-ratāḥ pārtha nānyad astīti vādinaḥ*. They think that performing these rituals of a particular religion and faith, that is all; no more. So Lord Caitanya says, Lord Caitanya in the shape of that astrologer says, that if you follow—it is given figuratively, that he is searching after the wealth left by his father. Similarly, we have got our father, the Supreme, and He is the supreme proprietor of everything. If we try to find out our father and father’s property by the ritualistic process—there are ritualistic processes in every religion and in every scripture—but if we stick to that, then the result will be they will be entrapped by the search, fanaticism, and it will be not possible to make progress. This is called *dakṣiṇa* system. *Dakṣiṇa*, *dakṣiṇa* means if he is giving him instruction that “Your house is bounded by east side, west side, north side and

south side. So if you go to the south...” South is translated into Sanskrit, *dakṣiṇa*. And *dakṣiṇa* also means giving something to the priest in respect of his service for performing rituals. So this is figuratively being used, *dakṣiṇa*. *Dakṣiṇa* means priesthood. If you follow the priesthood, then the result will be that ‘*bhīmarūla-barulī*’ *uṭhibe*, *dhana nā pāibe*. “There are some poisonous insects which will bite you, and you will not be able to dig out the wealth left by your father.” So this poisonous effect is that the priesthood, they are for business. They will never give you the right thing, not it is in their power. Not it is in their power. That is going on. But if you find out, if you want to find out the Absolute Truth through this rituals and priesthood, then the result will be that you will be bitten by some poisonous insects and your attempt will be unsuccessful. *Paścime*, *paścime khudibe*. ‘*paścime*’ *khudibe*, *tāhā ‘yakṣa’ eka haya se vighna (karibe)*,—*dhane hāta nā paḍaya*. Then again, the system of *aḥaṅgama-pāsanā*, pantheism, philosophical speculation, pantheism, monism, atheism, agnosticism, so many isms there are. So if you follow these isms, there is a *jata*, there is another danger which you will not get any information of the Absolute Truth.

‘*uttare*’ *khudile āche kṛṣṇa ‘ajagare’*
dhana nāhi pābe, *khudite gilibe sabāre*

So *uttara*, *uttara* means *uttara-mīmāṃsā*. There is a philosophy which is called *karma-mīmāṃsā*. *Karma-mīmāṃsā* means there is no need of making your relationship with God. God is Supreme, accepted, but He is bound to give you the result of your honest work. This is another philosophy. So you work honestly, there is more or less moral principles. If you stick to the moral principle, ethics and morals, then you will be entrapped by the prideness that “Oh, I am very moral. I do not speak lies. I do not steal. I treat with my neighbors very nicely. So I have no necessity to search out father. I am quite all right.” That means, this mundane moralist, if you become mundane moralist, or if you become mundane philosopher or if you stick to the ritualistic process of your particular faith, then there is no hope of reaching to the Absolute Truth. Mundane scriptural, ritualistic way and dry speculative philosophy and mundane moralists. Just like Arjuna and his brother. His eldest brother is Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira; he was very moralist, Dharmarāja. His name was “the king of religious principles,” Dharmarāja. So Kṛṣṇa Himself advised him that “You go to Droṇācārya and tell him a lie, that ‘Your son is dead. Your son is dead.’” “Now Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, he was a mundane moralist, so “How can I tell lie? How can I tell lie? I have never spoken lie in my life.” So there was some argument. Of course this was, fight was, some compromise was made between them in the camp. So he became a mundane moralist. He did not consider that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is asking me to tell lie.” So he could not transgress his moral principles so he could not become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. He (was) considered mundane moralism, so it was not possible for him to become a Kṛṣṇa conscious person. He could not take Kṛṣṇa’s order as the Supreme. But Arjuna, in the

beginning, he was hesitating to fight and kill his kinsmen, and when he understood that “Kṛṣṇa wants this fight,” he decided, “Yes, I shall do.” This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

So these are the principles. If we stick to the particular type of ritualism—because I confess a particular type of faith, and my faith describes this sort of ritualism, I must follow—then you stick to that, you cannot make any progress. And if you go on simply philosophizing—this ism, that ism, that ism, nonsense-ism—then also you will not be able. And if you become mundane moralist, then also you will not be able. You have to become transcendental to all these mundane principles; then it will be possible to become perfectly Kṛṣṇa conscious. So it is not transgressing, because as soon as you become really Kṛṣṇa conscious, then you become all: you become a philosopher, you become a ritualistic, you become actually moralist. What is the standard of morals? Can you explain? What is the standard of morality? Can you explain? Can any one of you say? Have you got any idea what is the standard of morality? The standard of morality is to obey the Supreme. That is standard of morality. Standard of morality does not mean that you manufacture something morality out of your concoction. No. Standard of morality is to obey the Supreme. That is standard of morality. Example. Example is, just like this State, the State has law that if you commit murder, then you will be hanged. It is immoral. If you commit theft, then you will be punished. But when the State says that you go and become a spy and become a thief and bring out these documents on the enemy’s camp, that is morality. If you kill a man, you will be hanged. But when the State order, if you kill an enemy, hundreds of enemy, you will be awarded gold medal. So if you stick to the principle, theft and murder, and do not follow the State order, you will be considered, what is called, tyrant, or what is that? Traitor. Traitor.

So if in our practical experience we see to obey the order of the Supreme is morality, standard of morality, don’t you think to obey the supermost supreme, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, to obey Him, that is morality. That is morality. So if you stick to the mundane principle, then it will not be. Therefore the astrologer advises the poor man,

*pūrva-dike tâte māṭi alpā khudite
dhanera jhāri paḍibeka tomāra hātete*

In other words, that if you take this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotional service, a slight attempt will give you the treasury house of that wealth. A slight attempt. *Sv-alpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*. This is the only, only path. *Bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ* [Bg. 18.55]. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* you will find that if you actually want God, then you will have to follow this process, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord. That will make you successful. Even if you execute a little percentage of this process, then you will touch at once, at least you will know, “Oh, here is the hidden box containing the treasure.” Now, gradually, you open it and then enjoy. But at once you will get information, “Here is the thing.” So this is the process. *Aiche śāstra kahe,—karma, jñāna, yoga tyajī’*.

Now, Lord Caitanya is explaining this system, different system, ritualistic, philosophical, meditation, morality, all these in *śāstra-kahe*. Real Vedic instruction... Just like, what is Veda? Veda means the words of the Lord. That is Veda. Scripture means the words of the Lord. God says, “Let there be light.” God says, “Let there be creation.” These words are scripture. Now one who takes out... Just like sound is transmitted from a certain place, and one who catches by the machine, he gets the information. Similarly, Veda means instruction transmitted by the Supreme Lord, and there are capable personalities, just like Brahmā, that capture it, and that is distributed, either in writing or by tradition, by hearing. That is scripture. The words of God. Now, here the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is personally speaking *Bhagavad-gītā*. Is it not Veda? That is Veda. That is real Veda. *Sarva-upaniṣade*. In the *Gītā-mahātmā* it is said, “This is the essence of all Veda.” This is Vedānta. Simply by studying *Bhagavad-gītā*, one becomes a learned science in the science of God. So *śāstra-kahe*. And what is that *śāstra*? The essence of all *śāstra*, the essence of all scripture, asks you to do—the *śāstra* says, the Lord says—*sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*: [Bg. 18.66] “Give up everything, just surrender under Me.” This is the most confidential part of knowledge.

So “give up everything” means there are different processes, different processes, ritualistic process, different religious processes, philosophical processes, meditation, so many. “Give up all them. Simply surrender to Kṛṣṇa.” So Lord Caitanya is stressing on that point, that *aiche śāstra kahe,—karma, jñāna, yoga tyajī*. Karma. Karma means general activities on moral principle. That is called karma. Karma means, real karma means that you have to live, so you have to work. So work in such a way that you may not be entangled. Just like honest businessman, he works, he works according to the law. He does not play any blackmailing, and he pays the proper income tax to the government and the other taxes. He does nicely. This is called work, karma. You have to live. Without working you cannot live. But you work in such a way so that you may not be entangled. That is called work, karma. Now, this work is not the solution of your human life. You can get some morsel of bread and eat and drink and sleep and just enjoy your life and die like cats and dogs, that’s all. And then you will take with you the result of your good work or bad work. That is karma. That is not solution. Then the next stage is, above this karma, this ordinary, general people, there is a class, they are thinkers. They are thinkers: “Whether this is the solution of life?” So thinkers, some of them are dry thinkers, they have no knowledge, but they think only. They do not get the source of knowledge from higher authorities; they manufacture their own way. So apart from that, those who are bona fide thinkers, they are called *jñānī*. *Jñānī* means that this process of karma cannot make solution of life. They push some philosophical thesis that “This is the solution of life.” They are called *jñānī*. The others, yogis, they meditate. So what they meditate? Not they meditate falsely; they meditate, they concentrate the whole senses and

put the focus on the soul and the Supersoul. So their endeavor is to make, reestablish with the Supersoul who is sitting in my heart. That is yoga system.

So all these systems can be adjusted only in one system, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the version of all the *śāstra*, all the Vedas. Lord Caitanya also confirms that

*aiche śāstra kahe,—karma, jñāna, yoga tyaji’
‘bhaktye’ kṛṣṇa vaśa haya, bhaktye tāñre bhaji*

If you want Kṛṣṇa, if you want God, then you don’t try to follow all these processes. You just try to follow devotional service to the Lord, *bhakti*, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That will please Kṛṣṇa. Then by His pleasing, He will reveal to you. He will reveal to you. God being pleased with your sincere service and love, He will let you know. Just like Arjuna is being instructed by the Supreme Lord, and He says, “My dear Arjuna, I am speaking to you the most confidential part of knowledge.” So if we become friends like Arjuna to Kṛṣṇa, then Kṛṣṇa will reveal Himself, as He is revealing Himself, “I am this, I am that, I am this, I am that.” (indistinct) So if you actually want to reestablish your lost relationship with Kṛṣṇa and God, then you have to adopt this Kṛṣṇa consciousness and nothing more.

Thank you very much. (end) (Śrīla Prabhupāda, lecture on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 20.125—New York, November 27, 1966)

Book Review:

“The Bhaktivedanta Purports”

— Perfect Explanation of the *Bhagavad Gītā*

By HH Śivarāma Swami

The book is a response on criticism of different degrees that has been made by various academics in their writings about the *Bhagavad Gītā* – As It Is. The Vaiṣṇavas are claiming integrity in maintaining the actual meaning of the text by approaching the subject matter through a succession of *acāryas*, which is rejected by the academics.

Śivarāma Mahārāja writes, “Thus at the outset, we are of divergent interests. The Vaiṣṇavas and the empiricists have different lines of approach in studying the *Gītā*. Baird exemplifies the non-devotional venue in his essay:

Swami Bhaktivedanta and the *Bhagavad-Gītā As It Is*. .. Hence, although from the standpoint of the devotee the scholar's approach may lack integrity, the academic is bound by a scholarly integrity of his own.

What is that integrity based on?

The historian is interested in learning precisely what the text has to say. He wants to understand everything that might be implied in the words of the text without importing anything that is not actually there. Furthermore, he is interested in understanding the *śloka*s in their historical setting. Exoteric meaning is his only realm, for the esoteric tradition is closed to him."

Mahārāja has identified five types of allegations made by scholars;

1. Why does Śrīla Prabhupāda insist on understanding the entirety of the *Gītā* exclusively in "devotional terms?"
2. Why does he explain "other yoga systems" as *bhakti-yoga* (Kṛṣṇa Consciousness)?
3. Why the constant "contrast" of other disciplines to *bhakti-yoga* and their subsequent disqualification in favor of Kṛṣṇa consciousness?
4. Why does he define and explain general terms in a solely devotional way?
5. Why does he translate general words in very specific devotional contexts, which then lend weight to a devotional interpretation?

Subsequently Maharaja acknowledges the observations made by the academics, but not the conclusion that therefore the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* would be a biased, inaccurate interpretation of the *Gītā*, which does not represent the actual meaning of the text.

Śivarāma Maharaja deals with each of the above-mentioned allegations in a very systematical and detailed way to establish that the meaning presented by Śrīla Prabhupāda is indeed the meaning intended by Kṛṣṇa Himself, as He explained the *Gītā* to Arjuna.

In the second chapter entitled "the flow of logic" Maharaja lists eight points of evidence or *Anumāna*, for which in the remainder of the book he offers extensive support:

1. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme personality of Godhead. One must accept this on faith or at least, theoretically, for the purpose of this paper.
2. *Bhagavad-gītā* is Lord Kṛṣṇa's Absolute statement and as such, is not subject to speculative interpretations.
3. *Bhagavad-gītā* is consistent and has a particular theme and conclusion.
4. The *Gītā* can be quoted as authority and, as such, it is authoritative in verifying its own purpose.
5. The *Gītā* is part of the Vedic *smṛti-śāstra*, it is known as the *Gītāpaniṣad*, and its conclusion must concur with that of the body of Vedic texts.
6. As Kṛṣṇa is the perfect teacher, so Arjuna is the perfect student of the *Gītā*.
7. The perfect understanding of the *Gītā* is that which concurs with Arjuna's understanding.
8. As miscellaneous points we shall include the following:
 - i. Śrīla Prabhupāda's Sanskrit text for his *Gītā* is authentic.
 - ii. Śrīla Prabhupāda's rendition is the understanding of the Gauḍīya-sampradāya, and he is a current representative of that disciplic succession.
 - iii. Subsection 8 ii. includes the conclusion that the Absolute Truth is in the ultimate sense personal, i.e., the Supreme Being is a Person.
 - iv. The yoga systems of *karma*, *jñāna*, and *aṣṭāṅga* mentioned in the *Gītā* and this text, as well as any other spiritual practices, refer to classical Vedic procedures.
 - v. The version of *Bhagavad-gītā* As it is that we are using as reference is 1983 Revised and enlarged BBT Edition.

Śivarāma Mahārāja continues his line of reasoning by deriving subsidiary conclusions which he refers to as codes and corollaries. The ninth chapter elaborates on one of these codes; "Code four, Karma, Jñāna and Yoga are meant to achieve Bhakti."

Many arguments are presented to establish the above, one of the major points is: that *bhakti-yoga* is the only yoga that includes all the qualities that are given in the definitions of yoga found in the *Gītā*.

YOGA SYSTEM	ELEMENTS
<i>Karma</i>	work, knowledge
<i>Jñāna</i>	knowledge, renunciation
<i>Aṣṭāṅga</i>	knowledge, renunciation, meditation
<i>Bhakti</i>	knowledge, renunciation, meditation, devotion

It may not be expected that critical academics will merely accept the entire chain of proof, but maybe some of the points or when not even that, they would have to acknowledge that at least a representative of the Gauḍīya-sampradāya and disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda has made a noteworthy attempt to address the issues in connection with Śrīla Prabhupāda's translation and commentary.

The book is an important document, it serves a useful tool in our dialogue with the academic world and also help the Vaiṣṇava reader to understand Śrīla Prabhupāda's books more deeply; why for example he sometimes translates a word like *Brahman* as "The Supreme Personality of Godhead" or other yoga systems in the *Gītā* as *Bhakti-yoga* or Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The Computer as Idol

J. Weizenbaum (M.I.T.)

As many have observed modern science has become a religion, at least for Western man. Like other religions, it has a priesthood, roughly organized on hierarchical lines. It has temples, shrines, and rituals, and it has a body of canons, some of which we have heard pronounced at this conference. And. Like other religions, it has its own mythology. One myth in particular states that if, say, by experiment, a scientific theory is confronted in reality with a single contradiction, one piece of disconfirming evidence, then that theory is automatically set aside and a new theory

that takes the contradiction in to account is adopted. This is not the way science actually works.

In fact some people have the same type of very deep faith in modern science that do in their respective religions. This faith in science, grounded in its own dogma, leads to a defense of scientific theories far beyond the time any disconfirming evidence is unearthed.

Moreover, disconfirming evidence is generally not incorporated into the body of science in an open-minded way but by an elaboration of the already existing edifice (as, for example, by adding epicycles and generally in a way in which the resulting structure of science and its procedures excludes the possibility of putting the enterprise itself in to jeopardy. In other words, modern science has made itself immune to falsification in any terms the true believer will admit into argument.

Perhaps modern science's most devastating effect is that it leads its believers to think it to be the only legitimate source of knowledge about the world. This must sound very strange here in India, as it sounds also strange to me. But being a high priest, if not a bishop, in the cathedral to modern science—my university, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—I can testify that a great many of what we sometimes like to call “The MIT family,” faculty and students, believe that there is indeed no legitimate source of knowledge about the world other than modern science. This is as mistaken a belief as the belief that one can not gain legitimate knowledge from anything other than religion. Both are equally false.

Until recently modern science, seen as a religion, lacked a deity suitable as an object of worship. The machine, which is generally pictured as something that has gears, moving parts, and so on, has existed for a long time now. To modern man the machine certainly represents power, control, mastery over nature, in other words, attributes a worshipable deity should have. But the machine lacks mystery. In fact, it often *demystifies* in the sense that people believe that most anything can be transformed, metaphorically at least, into the form of a machine and then understood as such. The machine has become an almost universally applicable that demystifies both itself and the thing to which it refers—this, both for intellectuals of

all persuasions as well as for ordinary people, too. Perhaps most people today think a thing is not understood until it has been reduced to a mechanical process.

I think that this phenomenon has contributed to science inability to provide an idol which the faithful can worship as truly representative of their common faith. Now recently, within my lifetime the computer has appeared, and it seems to me that the computer fills that need. Modern man has seen that machines which physically destroy and reconstruct his environment—the steam-shovel, for example—are made in his own image. The steam-shovel has an arm and a hand and it digs into the ground, picks up objects and so forth. Clearly, it is a kind of imitation of a certain aspect of man. But the computer takes things a step farther. When instructing a computer² to think (if I may use that term for a moment) in imitation of human thought, we cross a subtle line.

Generally speaking, before writing a computer program, one believes that one knows how to solve the presenting problem and how to instruct the computer in such a way as to cause it to do what one has in mind. This is not always an easy task. Programs often don't work properly and have to be debugged. That is, errors have to be removed; that is usually a long process. It's a process of writing, and while writing, one learns. One sits down, believing one knows just what it is one wants to write, just how to program the computer, and in the act of attempting to give instructions, one discovers that one lacks understanding. In this way, one's knowledge may be improved just by the attempt to program a computer. In any case, once the computer is properly instructed, there is certainly a feeling—and I think it has some solidity—that the computer behaves in the image of man in the sense that one has taught it 'to think' (again I use that word) like a human being and to do what a human being would do to solve that particular problem.

But, as I said, this leads to the crossing of a very subtle line, and after running over that line during programming, the first impression many people get is that the person is inferior to the computer, that the programmer is in some way a defective imitation. And in certain ways the computer *is* better than human beings. This is

² Let me emphasize that when I speak of instructing a computer in this instance, I am speaking of programming it. Actually, the distinction between program and computer hardware is a very problematic thing, which I will not cover here.

what gives rise to the feeling, not that the computer is made in the imitation of man, but, quite the other way around, that in a certain sense man is made in the image of the computer. So we may start out by thinking that the computer is modeled after the brain or human thought, but then we turn around and say instead that the brain itself is a kind of computer. For example yesterday someone pointed to his head and said, “the computer up here.”

Perhaps it was intended as an amusing gesture, but at the same time, it was an almost universally recognized comment, one which is, I think, quite serious and, under the circumstance, dangerous.

Artificial intelligence is the sub-discipline of computer science that has grown up in the United States. At this stage, and I would say even mainly at my institution, it is seen as a purer form of intelligence than that within this human embodiment. The computer is considered less likely to be misled by mere judgments and other matters arising from the biological constitution of the human being. I am thinking here of some of my colleagues' views. For example, Forester, of great model-making fame, said in print that mental models are always defective, that we can think better and more reliably through a computer.

Obviously, then, the conclusion we must come to is that while sentimental people argue that God is love, the tough modern man, or at least the tough modern Western man, knows that God is really intelligence. I hope it is very clear to you that I totally disagree with this position. It is, however, the dogma of a for-the-moment-victorious religion that worships intelligence and its embodiment in the computer. This “religion” pronounces an apocalyptic prophecy. According to this prophecy—which certainly has a basis in reality—the earth's people will one day destroy themselves and their gene pool.

Of course as many other speakers have remarked, the whole human race is in an extremely dangerous situation. The likelihood that we will in fact destroy ourselves is much too large to ignore. It is very real. Some of us—I hope most of us—who have struggled against it certainly don't believe that it is an inevitable or desirable end to the human story. But when one accepts, as many of my colleagues do, that intelligence is in some sense the purpose of the universe, that God is intelligence,

not love, that, to put it in another way, the purpose (if one may use that term at all) of organic evolution is not the perfection and adaptation of living organisms to their changing environment but rather the perfection and growth of intelligence in the universe, then the extinction of the human race also becomes an acceptable end.

Strange as it may seem to you, I emphasize again that this view is very widely held among scientists and intellectuals in the United States. Accepting the thesis means that one accepts that the destruction of the human gene pool is not a catastrophe at all, provided, of course, that we, the human race, have assured the continuation of intelligence beyond the human level. In fact, according to some of my colleagues, we have already accomplished this. Even if the earth blows up in an atomic holocaust, we have now sent computers into space which will continue to orbit, to make their computations and so on. Soon, according to this apocalyptic vision, these computers will be able to reproduce themselves, and when they do, the human race will have accomplished its purpose.

This is a satanic vision. In that new utopia, God will have eliminated the source and power of evil from the universe, and what remains will be a mechanic kingdom in which truth with a capital “T” and righteousness, or pure intelligence, can reign undisturbed forever. This reasoning, which, as I said, is more or less explicitly gaining dominance amongst scientists, technologists, and many intellectuals, is a philosophical foundation, on the basis of which the destruction of the human species, a very realistic threat, becomes defensible. In a certain sense, it provides a philosophically tilled soil in which the idea of an absolute genocide becomes thinkable. It argues that the purpose of the universe is the evolution of ever higher forms of intelligence. At the moment we happen to be the carriers. As perhaps the most highly developed intelligence in the universe, we’ve now succeeded in creating our truly worth successors: computers. We have the tools of destruction in our hands, but we’ve sent computers into timeless, endless space, and thus, having fulfilled our destiny, we have no reason to grieve over the probable death of our species.

At precisely this time, this murderous theology invades the human mind and spirit. Those who propagate this idolatry—and that’s what it is, idolatry—and who

themselves venerate the machine in the sense that I have described, who themselves can't see what seems to me so perfectly obvious—that there is a difference between humans and machines, and between human thought and machine thought—risk in my view becoming full conspirators in the murder of God. (From: *Synthesis of Science and Religion*, Bhaktivedanta Institute, 1986)

Religion and Science

*The following article by Albert Einstein appeared in the **New York Times Magazine** on November 9, 1930 pp 1-4. It has been reprinted in **Ideas and Opinions**, Crown Publishers, Inc. 1954, pp 36—40. It also appears in Einstein's book **The World as I See It**, Philosophical Library, New York, 1949, pp. 24—28.*



EVERYTHING THAT THE human race has done and thought is concerned with the satisfaction of deeply felt needs and the assuagement of pain. One has to keep this constantly in mind if one wishes to understand spiritual movements and their development. Feeling and longing are the motive force behind all human endeavor and human creation, in however exalted a guise the latter may present themselves to us. Now what are the feelings and needs that have led men to religious thought and belief in the widest sense of the words?

A little consideration will suffice to show us that the most varying emotions preside over the birth of religious thought and experience. With primitive man it is above all fear that evokes religious notions—fear of hunger, wild beasts, sickness, death. Since at this stage of existence understanding of causal connections is usually poorly developed, the human mind creates illusory beings more or less analogous to itself on whose wills and actions these fearful

happenings depend. Thus one tries to secure the favor of these beings by carrying out actions and offering sacrifices which, according to the tradition handed down from generation to generation, propitiate them or make them well disposed toward a mortal. In this sense I am speaking of a religion of fear. This, though not created, is in an important degree stabilized by the formation of a special priestly caste which sets itself up as a mediator between the people and the beings they fear, and erects a hegemony on this basis. In many cases a leader or ruler or a privileged class whose position rests on other factors combines priestly functions with its secular authority in order to make the latter more secure; or the political rulers and the priestly caste make common cause in their own interests.

The social impulses are another source of the crystallization of religion. Fathers and mothers and the leaders of larger human communities are mortal and fallible. The desire for guidance, love, and support prompts men to form the social or moral conception of God. This is the God of Providence, who protects, disposes, rewards,



and punishes; the God who, according to the limits of the believer's outlook, loves and cherishes the life of the tribe or of the human race, or even of life itself; the comforter in sorrow and unsatisfied longing; he who preserves the souls of the dead. This is the social or moral conception of God.

The Jewish scriptures admirably illustrate the development from the religion of fear to moral religion, a development continued in the New Testament. The religions of all civilized peoples, especially the peoples of the Orient, are primarily moral religions. The development from a religion of fear to moral religion is a great step in peoples' lives. And yet, that primitive religions are based entirely on fear and the religions of civilized peoples purely on morality is a prejudice against which we must be on our guard. The truth is that all religions are a varying blend of both types, with this differentiation: that on the

higher levels of social life the religion of morality predominates. Common to all these types is the anthropomorphic character of their conception of God. In general, only individuals of exceptional endowments, and exceptionally high-minded communities, rise to any considerable extent above this level. But there is a third stage of religious experience which belongs to all of them, even though it is rarely found in a pure form: I shall call it cosmic religious feeling.

It is very difficult to elucidate this feeling to anyone who is entirely without it, especially as there is no anthropomorphic conception of God corresponding to it. The individual feels the futility of human desires and aims and the sublimity and marvelous order which reveal themselves both in nature and in the world of thought. Individual existence impresses him as a sort of prison and he wants to experience the universe as a single significant whole. The beginnings of cosmic religious feeling already appear at an early stage of development, e.g., in many of the Psalms of David and in some of the Prophets. Buddhism, as we have learned especially from the wonderful writings of Schopenhauer, contains a much stronger element of this.

The religious geniuses of all ages have been distinguished by this kind of religious feeling, which knows no dogma and no God conceived in man's image; so that there can be no church whose central teachings are based on it. Hence it is precisely among the heretics of every age that we find men who were filled with this highest kind of religious feeling and were in many cases regarded by their contemporaries as atheists, sometimes also as saints. Looked at in this light, men like Democritus, Francis of Assisi, and Spinoza are closely akin to one another. How can cosmic religious feeling be communicated from one person to another, if it can give rise to no definite notion of a God and no theology? In my view, it is the most important function of art and science to awaken this feeling and keep it alive in those who are

receptive to it. We thus arrive at a conception of the relation of science to religion very different from the usual one.



When one views the matter historically, one is inclined to look upon science and religion as irreconcilable antagonists, and for a very obvious reason. The man who is thoroughly convinced of the universal operation of the law of causation cannot for a moment entertain the idea of a being who interferes in the course of events—provided, of course, that he takes the hypothesis of causality really seriously. He has no use for the religion of fear and equally little for social or moral religion. A God who rewards and punishes is inconceivable to him for the simple reason that a man's actions are determined by necessity, external and internal, so that in God's eyes he cannot be responsible, any more than an inanimate object is responsible for the motions it undergoes. Science has therefore been charged with undermining morality, but the charge is unjust. A man's ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties and needs; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hopes of reward after death. It is therefore easy to see why the churches have always fought science and persecuted its devotees. On the other hand, I maintain that the cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest motive for scientific research. Only those who realize the immense efforts and, above all, the devotion without which pioneer work in theoretical science cannot be achieved are able to grasp the strength of the emotion out of which alone such work, remote as it is from the immediate realities of life, can issue. What a deep conviction of the rationality of the universe and what a yearning to understand, were it but a feeble reflection of the mind revealed in this world, Kepler and Newton must have had to enable them to spend years of solitary labor in disentangling the principles of celestial mechanics! Those whose

acquaintance with scientific research is derived chiefly from its practical results easily develop a completely false notion of the mentality of the men who, surrounded by a skeptical world, have shown the way to kindred spirits scattered wide through the world and through the centuries. Only one who has devoted his life to similar ends can have a vivid realization of what has inspired these men and given them the strength to remain true to their purpose in spite of countless failures. It is cosmic religious feeling that gives a man such strength. A contemporary has said, not unjustly, that in this materialistic age of ours the serious scientific workers are the only profoundly religious people.

Good and Evil

This world is not arranged by the plan of the Lord

Leibnitz says that the world could have been different if God desired, but that He chose this particular arrangement, and from the standpoint of it's ingredients, this is the best possible world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, God can do anything He likes, but this world is not planned by God, it is given to the living entities who wanted to imitate God. So actually the plan is according to the desire of the living entities, who wanted to imitate God. (Śrīla Prabhupāda, *Collected Lectures*, vol. 6, p. 558)

Theological problem of evil

An *antilogism* that stems from assuming three things, only two of which are compatible (sometimes called the *incompatible triad*):

1. the omnipotence of God
2. the omnibenevolence of God
3. the existence of evil.

Epicurus presented the problem in this way:

- Is God willing to prevent evil, but *not able* to prevent evil? Then He is not omnipotent.
- Is God able to prevent evil, but *not willing* to prevent evil? Then He is not omnibenevolent.
- Is God *both* willing and able to prevent evil? Then why does evil exist?

Hume presented the same problem thus:

“If evil in the world is the intention of the Deity, then He is not benevolent. If evil in the world is contrary to His intention, then He is not omnipotent. But evil is either in accordance with His intention or contrary to it. Therefore, either the Deity is not benevolent, or He is not omnipotent. (*The Harper Collins Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd edition.)

Good and evil

Good and evil are both originating from God and are known as the front and the backside of the Lord. Such duality is perceived from the material point of view. On the spiritual plane there is only good. The sun causes darkness and light within this world. So it appears as if the sun has a dark side and a light side, but that is only when observed from earth, in reality the sun is always light on all sides.

Carl Jung: “Answers to Job”

Carl Jung concludes that evil can not be a force that works independent from God, but rather must be under control of God. He allows the devil to do it’s evil work.

In answer to Job, Jung hold God responsible for the sufferings of Job.

Carl Jung’s *Answer to Job* concerns itself with the origins, meaning and practice of what he calls “the continuing incarnation of God” which can be summarized as follows:

Following His encounter with Job, Yahweh realizes that he is “morally inferior” to His own creation. As Jung says, “Job stands morally higher than Yahweh. In this respect the creature has surpassed the creator.. . [Therefore] because his creature has surpassed him [Yahweh] must regenerate himself [as man].” (Paragraph 640)

Thus, the Incarnation of Christ in Jesus is not so much to save Mankind from its sins as it is to purge God of the wrongs He has committed against man. As Jung says, “Yahweh must become man precisely because he has done man [i.e., Job] a wrong.” (Ibid, par. 640)

To sum up, “the immediate cause of the Incarnation [in Jesus] lies in Job’s elevation, and its purpose is the differentiation of Yahweh’s consciousness.” (Par. 642)

Yahweh therefore determines to “become man,” in Jung’s words, “which resulted from his collision with Job” and is “fulfilled in Christ’s life and suffering.” (Par. 648)

However, once having incarnated in Jesus, Yahweh determines to continue incarnating in mankind through the Paraclete he promises to send in the Gospel of John. As Jung states, “Since he [the Paraclete] is the Third Person of the Deity [i.e., Sephirah Tiferet]. .. God will be begotten in creaturely man [which]. .. implies a tremendous change in man’s status, for now he is raised to sonship [with Christ] and almost to the position of a man-god.” (Par. 692)

Therefore Jung concludes, “the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the Third Divine Person [i.e., Zeir Anpin of Kabbalah], in man, brings about a Christification of many.” (Par. 758)

Nevertheless, he continues, “even the enlightened person remains what he is, and is never more than his own limited ego before the One who dwells within him, whose form has no knowable boundaries, who encompasses him on all sides, fathomless as the abysses of the earth and vast as the sky.” (Ibid, Par. 758)

The Śrī Kṛṣṇa Samhita, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

An attempt to communicate Vedic knowledge to the westernized world

This book was particularly written for the *Bhadraloka*, the Calcutta intellectuals present at that time, who under British influence were inclined to look at the Vedic literature from a western empiric perspective. And in a more general sense the book presents the Vedic knowledge in more acceptable terms for a modern, educated audience.

There is a sixty page introduction written from this modern perspective, followed by a more orthodox ten chapter presentation of *Bhāgavata* philosophy. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes in the preface, “With folded hands I request the old-fashioned readers to understand that if some conclusion is found herein that is contrary to their preconceptions, it was written with particular persons in mind. Whatever is written about religious codes, however, should be accepted by all.”

In the introduction Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is catering to the modern intellectuals, both Indian and British, of his time. One section deals with the Aryan invasion, the dating of the Aryan scriptures and establishing the Aryan culture as the oldest of the world. There is a reference about the Aryan culture coming from Brahmavarta, some northwest country, into India. The following footnote is included: “In the *Mahābhārata*, *Vana-parva* 82.102, Devī’s Tirtha near Kashmir is described as follows. *Prasūtir yatra viprāṇām śrīyate bharataṣabha*. It is said that *brāhmaṇas* first came in to existence in that place.” (KS, p. 10)

Upon hearing this even the devotee reader may get a little excited—is there common ground between Vedic and modern views. However, soon that excitement will subside, when one realizes that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is referring to the era of the Dakṣa yājña and that the dating he is using here stems from the academic view of his time, which places Dakṣa and the *prajāpatis* at 4463 BC. Somewhat of a difference one might say, with the Vedic time calculation where Dakṣa as one of the mental sons of Brahma appears in the beginning of Lord Brahma’s life. At present about half of lord Brahma’s life is supposed to have passed. One day alone amounts to 1000 x 432,000,000 years. There is also a progressive development with dates given of the Vedic literatures. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura comments; ‘According to our scriptures the calculation of the dates are not like this. We believe only the statement of the scriptures. I have presented the modern conclusions for the benefit of the concerned people.

It’s clear that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is employing a preaching strategy to present the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He writes; “I had a great desire to translate *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in this proper swanlike way, but I have no time to translate this huge

work. For this reason I am now extracting the main purport of this great literature and presenting it in the form of this *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Samhita*.”

Section Five:

Faith—Student Assignments

Essay Concepts

Each of the essays is meant to be at least 10 pages and is intended to impart a well-researched and documented presentation of the topic.

1. How did the twelve <i>mahājanas</i> display faith?	Follow the anecdotes in <i>Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam</i> and present the points with relevant quotations.
2. How did Śrīla Prabhupāda preach with argument and logic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For examples use <i>Collected Lectures and Conversations With Śrīla Prabhupāda & Śikṣāmṛta</i>.• Explain the need for logic.• The difference with mental speculation.
3. How is the <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> principally a book of faith?	Arjuna was overwhelmed by grief; how did Kṛṣṇa change Arjuna's perception? Follow the line of reasoning until Arjuna conquers his grief and is convinced to follow Kṛṣṇa's words.
4. Faith and Falldown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe examples of falldown, analyze the causes, and discuss prevention.• Use examples from <i>Bhagavad-</i>

	<p><i>gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Caitanya-caritāmṛta.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also address the topic in relation to ISKCON (no personal details)
<p>5. Prabhupāda the Founder-<i>Ācārya</i>—the inspiration for generations to come.</p>	<p>A well-rounded document presenting his prominence by post, precepts & achievements.</p> <p>Prabhupada's unique position in the Golden Age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He took Kṛṣṇa consciousness worldwide. • Lawbooks for the next 10,000 years.
<p>6. Faith development in ISKCON</p>	<p>1966: ISKCON is fresh, enthusiastic, strong faith in Swamiji, naive, idealistic, ready to take on the world.</p> <p>2002: ISKCON has a history of success and failure, more reserved, needs to strengthen leadership, has more maturity, now only Prabhupāda <i>vani</i>.</p>
<p>7. Are we Hindus?</p>	<p>Explain the origin of the term à There are no Hindus and to group a wide range of beliefs under one nomer may cause misidentification.</p>
<p>8. Atheism</p>	<p>Apply logic</p>
<p>9. <i>Harer nāmaiva kevalam</i></p>	<p>The only way</p>

10. Why did we join? What did we join?	
11. Prabhupāda, the living proof	
12. Show how Kṛṣṇa consciousness is superior	
13. Describe the practices of devotional service and the results.	
14. Explain why <i>acintya bheda-abheda-tattva</i> makes perfect sense.	
15. How to develop ‘Love of God’, when He is the source of evil?	
16. What do you do for fun?	<i>Śreyas & preyas (The four principles of Freedom, Satyaraja)</i>

Śraddha

Fixing the Heart on the Truth

Appendixes

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Appendix 1 — God Concepts

These fall into a general classification that refers to the *number* of gods and the *degree* to which it is believed God is *identical with*, or is an IMMANENT or TRANSCENDENT force operating in the universe. The following is a list of some of the God concepts adhering to this classification: **1. *polytheism*** (from Greek, *polys*, many + *theos*, god). The belief in the existence of many Gods. **2. *kathenotheism*** (Greek from *kath'en*, one by one, + *theos*, god) a form of *polytheism*, or, depending on the perspective,, a form of *monotheism* or *monism*. Of the many gods named and believed in, each in turn (thus, one by one) at a designated time of the year is worshipped and given the allegiance and respect customary to a supreme deity, in the realization that each god only symbolizes one of the innumerable facets of a more complex and fundamental reality or God that is the source of all things. **3. *henotheism*** (from Greek, *heis* or *enos*, one, + *theos*, god) a form of *polytheism*. Of the many gods that exist, one is their supreme ruler, to whom the others must give their loyalty and obedience. **4. *dualism*** the belief that two gods exist, one a force for good, the other a force for evil, both vying for control of the universe. **5. *monotheism*** (from Greek, *monos*, one, single, alone, one-and-only, +*theos*,god) the belief that there is one-and-only-one God. **6. *pantheism*** (from Greek, *pan*, all+*theos*, god) the belief that God is identical with the universe. All is God and God is all. The universe taken as a whole is God. God and nature (universe, the totality of that there is) are synonymous, two words for the same thing. **7. *panentheism*** (from Greek *pan*,all, + en, in, + *theos* god) all things are imbued with God's being in the sense that all things are in God. God is more than all that there is. God is a consciousness and the highest unity possible. **8. *panpsychism*** (from Greek, *pan*,all + *psyche*, soul,spirit,mind + *theos*, god) the belief that God is completely immanent in all things within the universe as a psychic force (mind, consciousness, spirit, soul). **9. *theism*** (from Greek, *theos*,god) in most interpretations: God is partly immanent in the universe and partly transcendent. **10. *deism*** (from Latin, *deus*,god) in most interpretations: God is totally transcendent, *wholly other* to the univers, and none of God's being is immanent in the universe. (From: *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd edition)

Appendix 2 — Arguments for the existence of God

Common consent argument for God's existence also known as the *consensus gentium* argument, the attempt to prove the existence of God by appeal to the universally held belief in all cultures in all ages that there is a God (of some kind or other). This is the argument holding that God exists on the grounds that there is universal consent, (belief, assent, assurance).

Argument from design sometimes simply the *design argument*.¹ Kant refers to it as the *physico-theological argument*. Refers to any of the wide assortment of arguments for God's existence that rely on apparently purposeful design in the universe, to prove the existence of a God, that is a cosmic mind (designer)

Teleological argument for the existence of God embodied in a variety of forms, among them the following: **1.** order (purpose, design, pattern) exists in the universe. Order cannot exist without an orderer. Therefore God exists as the source of that order. **2.** things move toward goals; they struggle to complete themselves. God exist as the intelligent being that a.) impels things toward their goals., sets up the goals, and c.) designs the means by which these goals are to be attained. **3.** the universe as a whole has a purpose to which it is struggling. God exists as the creator and the sustainer of that purpose.

Ontological argument for God's existence

The following from the *Proslogion* is the main version of the ontological argument for God's existence found in Anselm: **1.** God is "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" (*aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit*). **2.** God cannot be "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" only *in intellectu* (in our mind, in the intellect, in our understanding); otherwise God would not be "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" (since that which exist *both* in reality and in our mind is greater than that which exists only in our mind) **3.** if God is "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" can be thought as part of our understanding, God must also be conceived to exist in reality, which is something greater ; otherwise, that something "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" thought of as existing in reality as well, would be greater than the one conceived only in our understanding- and that conception would thus be God, since God is "that than which nothing greater can be conceived."

Ontological argument for God's existence (Descartes)

The several ontological arguments for God's existence that can be found in Descartes' writings. Of the three presented here. The first and the second are pure forms of the ontological argument (bthe first being a condensed and simplified version of Anselm's ontological argument), and the third has a tinge of the causal argument mixed with it. (The third argument is presented in two parts) **1.** God is the completely perfect being. Existence is necessary for anything to be completely perfect. Therefore,

¹ The "Design Argument" is also used by Krishna Himself in the *Bhagavad Gita* Prabhupada is using what is known as the "design argument", that behind the universal order there is God to uphold it all. In one sense Krishna Himself is using the argument by confirming in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, that He is actively involved in sustaining the universe and that without Him everything would disintegrate.

"There is no reason to believe that all the gigantic planets float in space without the superior arrangement of a superior intelligence. This subject is clearly dealt with in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.13), where the Personality of Godhead says, "I enter into each planet, and by My energy they stay in orbit." Were the planets not held in the grip of the Personality of Godhead, they would all scatter like dust in the air." *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Ādi 2.10 pp.

God exists as the completely perfect being (for if God did not exist, God would not be the completely perfect being, which God is.) **2.** The essence of God is existence, just as the essence of a triangle is a plane figure composed of three straight lines joined together to form three angles equal to 180 degrees. One cannot think of a triangle without thinking of that essence. One cannot think of that essence without thinking of a triangle. The two necessarily go together. So whenever one thinks of God, one thinks of God's existence, and whenever one thinks of existence one thinks of God. The two go together necessarily.

Whenever we think of God without existence we contradict ourselves. Therefore God must exist (any other conclusion leads to a contradiction in terms.) **3. Part I:** I have an idea of God as a perfect infinite being. As a finite being I could not have caused this idea in me. The cause of this idea is greater than in reality and power than its effect. Therefore, God exists as this greater reality and power to produce upon my finite mind the idea of an infinite and completely perfect Being. **Part II:** I could not have caused myself (It requires more reality, power, and perfection to create substance than, for example, to create attributes, qualities, or properties). If I could have created (caused) myself, I would have given myself perfect attributes (which no finite being has). I have not existed eternally, nor do I have the power to maintain existence from moment to moment. I cannot say that I was caused only by my parents (who were caused by other parents, etc.). It is necessary, therefore to assume that an eternal, infinitely powerful, perfect God exists who is both the cause of my being and who implants the idea of God in my mind as well as in the minds of my parents, their parents, etc.

Cosmological argument for God's existence

Any of the arguments that proceed from what are regarded as observed facts about the universe, such as motion, cause, contingency, order, to the conclusion that God exists as the origin of and ground for these facts, such as *prime mover*, *first cause*, *necessary being*, and *orderer*. Proceeds from an analysis of the existence of things to the existence of God. And to one or more of God's characteristics. This is in contrast with the *ontological argument for God's existence*, which proceeds from the acceptance of the definition of God (God's essence) to God's existence. **2.** A cosmological argument may refer to any argument for God's existence based on the derivative and dependant nature of the universe upon something other than itself; based on the contingency of the universe and its utter dependence on a necessary being (God) who begins, supports, and maintains it (as the sound of the harp is dependent on a harpist).

All cosmological arguments stress a.) the behind-the-scene activity of this necessary being and b.) how different from the universe in essential characteristics that necessary being (God) is. God is nondependent, whereas the universe is dependent on God. God is self-moving, whereas the universe has motion imparted to it. God is eternal whereas the universe has a beginning in time. God is self actualized, whereas the universe is in a state of potential being partially actualized in time. God is immutable (unchanging), whereas the universe is in continual change.

Appendix 3 — Sixteen verses and purports about faith in the *Bhagavad-gītā*

3.31 *ye me matam idaṁ nityam
anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ
śraddhāvanto 'nasīyanto
mucyante te 'pi karmabhiḥ*

Those persons who execute their duties according to My injunctions and who follow this teaching faithfully, without envy, become free from the bondage of fruitive actions.

PURPORT: The injunction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is the essence of all Vedic wisdom and therefore is eternally true without exception. As the Vedas are eternal, so this truth of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is also eternal. One should have firm faith in this injunction, without envying the Lord. There are many philosophers who write comments on the *Bhagavad-gītā* but have no faith in Kṛṣṇa. They will never be liberated from the bondage of fruitive action. But an ordinary man with firm faith in the eternal injunctions of the Lord, even though unable to execute such orders, becomes liberated from the bondage of the law of karma. In the beginning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one may not fully discharge the injunctions of the Lord, but because one is not resentful of this principle and works sincerely without consideration of defeat and hopelessness, he will surely be promoted to the stage of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

4.39 *śraddhāvāl labhate jñānam
tat-paraḥ saṁyatendriyaḥ
jñānam labdhvā parāṁ śāntim
acireṇādhigacchati*

A faithful man who is dedicated to transcendental knowledge and who subdues his senses is eligible to achieve such knowledge, and having achieved it he quickly attains the supreme spiritual peace.

PURPORT: Such knowledge in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be achieved by a faithful person who believes firmly in Kṛṣṇa. One is called a faithful man who thinks that simply by acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness he can attain the highest perfection. This faith is attained by the discharge of devotional service, and by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, which cleanses one's heart of all material dirt. Over and above this, one should control the senses. A person who is faithful to Kṛṣṇa and who controls the senses can easily attain perfection in the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness without delay.

6.37

arjuna uvāca
ayatiḥ śraddhayopeto
yogāc calita-mānasaḥ
aprāpya yoga-samsiddhim
kām gatiṁ kṛṣṇa gacchati

Arjuna said: O Kṛṣṇa, what is the destination of the unsuccessful transcendentalist, who in the beginning takes to the process of self-realization with faith but who later desists due to worldly-mindedness and thus does not attain perfection in mysticism?

PURPORT: The path of self-realization or mysticism is described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The basic principle of self-realization is knowledge that the living entity is not this material body but that he is different from it and that his happiness is in eternal life, bliss and knowledge. These are transcendental, beyond both body and mind. Self-realization is sought by the path of knowledge, by the practice of the eightfold system or by *bhakti-yoga*. In each of these processes one has to realize the constitutional position of the living entity, his relationship with God, and the activities whereby he can reestablish the lost link and achieve the highest perfectional stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Following any of the above-mentioned three methods, one is sure to reach the supreme goal sooner or later. This was asserted by the Lord in the Second Chapter: even a little endeavor on the transcendental path offers a great hope for deliverance. Out of these three methods, the path of *bhakti-yoga* is especially suitable for this age because it is the most direct method of God realization. To be doubly assured, Arjuna is asking Lord Kṛṣṇa to confirm His former statement. One may sincerely accept the path of self-realization, but the process of cultivation of knowledge and the practice of the eightfold yoga system are generally very difficult for this age. Therefore, despite constant endeavor one may fail, for many reasons. First of all, one may not be sufficiently serious about following the process. To pursue the transcendental path is more or less to declare war on the illusory energy. Consequently, whenever a person tries to escape the clutches of the illusory energy, she tries to defeat the practitioner by various allurements. A conditioned soul is already allured by the modes of material energy, and there is every chance of being allured again, even while performing transcendental disciplines. This is called *yogāc calita-mānasaḥ*: deviation from the transcendental path. Arjuna is inquisitive to know the results of deviation from the path of self-realization.

6.47

yoginām api sarveṣāṁ
mad-gatenāntar-ātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām
sa me yuktatamo mataḥ

And of all *yogīs*, the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me—he is the most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all. That is My opinion.

PURPORT: The word *bhajate* is significant here. *Bhajate* has its root in the verb *bhaj*, which is used when there is need of service. The English word “worship” cannot be used in the same sense as *bhaj*. Worship means to adore, or to show respect and honor to the worthy one. But service with love and faith is especially meant for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One can avoid worshipping a respectable man or a demigod and may be called discourteous, but one cannot avoid serving the Supreme Lord without being thoroughly condemned. Every living entity is part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and thus every living entity is intended to serve the Supreme Lord by his own constitution. Failing to do this, he falls down. The *Bhāgavatam* (11.5.3) confirms this as follows:

*ya eṣāṁ puruṣaṁ sāksād
ātma-prabhavam īśvaram
na bhajanty avajānanti
sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ*

“Anyone who does not render service and neglects his duty unto the primeval Lord, who is the source of all living entities, will certainly fall down from his constitutional position.”

In this verse also the word *bhajanti* is used. Therefore, *bhajanti* is applicable to the Supreme Lord only, whereas the word “worship” can be applied to demigods or to any other common living entity. The word *avajānanti*, used in this verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is also found in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Avajānanti mām mūḍhāḥ*: “Only the fools and rascals deride the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa.” Such fools take it upon themselves to write commentaries on the *Bhagavad-gītā* without an attitude of service to the Lord. Consequently they cannot properly distinguish between the word *bhajanti* and the word “worship.”

The culmination of all kinds of yoga practices lies in *bhakti-yoga*. All other *yogas* are but means to come to the point of *bhakti* in *bhakti-yoga*. Yoga actually means *bhakti-yoga*; all other *yogas* are progressions toward the destination of *bhakti-yoga*. From the beginning of *karma-yoga* to the end of *bhakti-yoga* is a long way to self-realization. *Karma-yoga*, without fruitive results, is the beginning of this path. When *karma-yoga* increases in knowledge and renunciation, the stage is called *jñāna-yoga*. When *jñāna-yoga* increases in meditation on the Supersoul by different physical processes, and the mind is on Him, it is called *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. And when one surpasses the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* and comes to the point of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, it is called *bhakti-yoga*, the culmination. Factually, *bhakti-yoga* is the ultimate goal, but to analyze *bhakti-yoga* minutely one has to understand these other *yogas*. The *yogī* who is progressive is therefore on the true path of eternal good fortune. One who sticks to a particular point and does not make further progress is called by that particular name: *karma-yogī*, *jñāna-yogī* or *dhyāna-yogī*, *rāja-yogī*, *hatha-yogī*, etc. If one is fortunate enough to come to the point of *bhakti-yoga*, it is to be understood that he has surpassed all

other *yogas*. Therefore, to become Kṛṣṇa conscious is the highest stage of yoga, just as, when we speak of Himālayan, we refer to the world's highest mountains, of which the highest peak, Mount Everest, is considered to be the culmination.

It is by great fortune that one comes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness on the path of *bhakti-yoga* to become well situated according to the Vedic direction. The ideal *yogī* concentrates his attention on Kṛṣṇa, who is called Śyāmasundara, who is as beautifully colored as a cloud, whose lotuslike face is as effulgent as the sun, whose dress is brilliant with jewels and whose body is flower-garlanded. Illuminating all sides is His gorgeous luster, which is called the *brahmajyoti*. He incarnates in different forms such as Rāma, Nṛsiṃha, Varāha and Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He descends like a human being, as the son of mother Yaśodā, and He is known as Kṛṣṇa, Govinda and Vāsudeva. He is the perfect child, husband, friend and master, and He is full with all opulences and transcendental qualities. If one remains fully conscious of these features of the Lord, he is called the highest *yogī*.

This stage of highest perfection in yoga can be attained only by *bhakti-yoga*, as is confirmed in all Vedic literature:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanah*

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.” [ŚU 6.23]

Bhaktir asya bhajanaṁ tad ihāmutropādhi-nairāsyenāmuṣmīn manah-kalpanam, etad eva naiṣkarmyam. “*Bhakti* means devotional service to the Lord which is free from desire for material profit, either in this life or in the next. Devoid of such inclinations, one should fully absorb the mind in the Supreme. That is the purpose of *naiṣkarmya*.” (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 1.15)

These are some of the means for performance of *bhakti*, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the highest perfectional stage of the yoga system.

7.21

*yo yo yāṁ yāṁ tanuṁ bhaktaḥ
śraddhayārcitum icchati
tasya tasyācalāṁ śraddhāṁ
tām eva vidadhāmy aham*

I am in everyone's heart as the Supersoul. As soon as one desires to worship some demigod, I make his faith steady so that he can devote himself to that particular deity.

PURPORT: God has given independence to everyone; therefore, if a person desires to have material enjoyment and wants very sincerely to have such facilities from the material demigods, the Supreme Lord, as Supersoul in everyone's heart, understands and gives facilities to such persons. As the

supreme father of all living entities, He does not interfere with their independence, but gives all facilities so that they can fulfill their material desires. Some may ask why the all-powerful God gives facilities to the living entities for enjoying this material world and so lets them fall into the trap of the illusory energy. The answer is that if the Supreme Lord as Supersoul does not give such facilities, then there is no meaning to independence. Therefore He gives everyone full independence—whatever one likes—but His ultimate instruction we find in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: one should give up all other engagements and fully surrender unto Him. That will make man happy.

Both the living entity and the demigods are subordinate to the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; therefore the living entity cannot worship the demigod by his own desire, nor can the demigod bestow any benediction without the supreme will. As it is said, not a blade of grass moves without the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Generally, persons who are distressed in the material world go to the demigods, as they are advised in the Vedic literature. A person wanting some particular thing may worship such and such a demigod. For example, a diseased person is recommended to worship the sun-god; a person wanting education may worship the goddess of learning, Sarasvatī; and a person wanting a beautiful wife may worship the goddess Umā, the wife of Lord Śiva. In this way there are recommendations in the *śāstras* (Vedic scriptures) for different modes of worship of different demigods. And because a particular living entity wants to enjoy a particular material facility, the Lord inspires him with a strong desire to achieve that benediction from that particular demigod, and so he successfully receives the benediction. The particular mode of the devotional attitude of the living entity toward a particular type of demigod is also arranged by the Supreme Lord. The demigods cannot infuse the living entities with such an affinity, but because He is the Supreme Lord, or the Supersoul who is present in the hearts of all living entities, Kṛṣṇa gives impetus to man to worship certain demigods. The demigods are actually different parts of the universal body of the Supreme Lord; therefore they have no independence. In the Vedic literature it is stated: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead as Supersoul is also present within the heart of the demigod; therefore He arranges through the demigod to fulfill the desire of the living entity. But both the demigod and the living entity are dependent on the supreme will. They are not independent.”

7.22

*sa tayā śraddhayā yuktas
tasyārāadhanam ihate
labhate ca tataḥ kāmān
mayaiva vihitān hi tāt*

Endowed with such a faith, he endeavors to worship a particular demigod and obtains his desires. But in actuality these benefits are bestowed by Me alone.

PURPORT: The demigods cannot award benedictions to their devotees without the permission of the Supreme Lord. The living entity may forget that everything is the property of the Supreme Lord, but the demigods do not forget. So the worship of demigods and achievement of desired results are due not to the demigods but to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by arrangement. The less intelligent

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living entity does not know this, and therefore he foolishly goes to the demigods for some benefit. But the pure devotee, when in need of something, prays only to the Supreme Lord. Asking for material benefit, however, is not a sign of a pure devotee. A living entity goes to the demigods usually because he is mad to fulfill his lust. This happens when something undue is desired by the living entity and the Lord Himself does not fulfill the desire. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said that one who worships the Supreme Lord and at the same time desires material enjoyment is contradictory in his desires. Devotional service to the Supreme Lord and the worship of a demigod cannot be on the same platform, because worship of a demigod is material and devotional service to the Supreme Lord is completely spiritual.

For the living entity who desires to return to Godhead, material desires are impediments. A pure devotee of the Lord is therefore not awarded the material benefits desired by less intelligent living entities, who therefore prefer to worship demigods of the material world rather than engage in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord.

9.23

*ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā
yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
te 'pi mām eva kaunteya
yajanty avidhi-pūrvakam*

Those who are devotees of other gods and who worship them with faith actually worship only Me, O son of Kuntī, but they do so in a wrong way.

PURPORT: “Persons who are engaged in the worship of demigods are not very intelligent, although such worship is offered to Me indirectly,” Kṛṣṇa says. For example, when a man pours water on the leaves and branches of a tree without pouring water on the root, he does so without sufficient knowledge or without observing regulative principles. Similarly, the process of rendering service to different parts of the body is to supply food to the stomach. The demigods are, so to speak, different officers and directors in the government of the Supreme Lord. One has to follow the laws made by the government, not by the officers or directors. Similarly, everyone is to offer his worship to the Supreme Lord only. That will automatically satisfy the different officers and directors of the Lord. The officers and directors are engaged as representatives of the government, and to offer some bribe to the officers and directors is illegal. This is stated here as *avidhi-pūrvakam*. In other words, Kṛṣṇa does not approve the unnecessary worship of the demigods.

12.2

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
mayy āveśya mano ye mām
nitya-yuktā upāsate
śraddhayā parayopetās
te me yuktatamā matāḥ*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Those who fix their minds on My personal form and are always engaged in worshiping Me with great and transcendental faith are considered by Me to be most perfect.

PURPORT: In answer to Arjuna's question, Kṛṣṇa clearly says that he who concentrates upon His personal form and who worships Him with faith and devotion is to be considered most perfect in yoga. For one in such Kṛṣṇa consciousness there are no material activities, because everything is done for Kṛṣṇa. A pure devotee is constantly engaged. Sometimes he chants, sometimes he hears or reads books about Kṛṣṇa, or sometimes he cooks *prasādam* or goes to the marketplace to purchase something for Kṛṣṇa, or sometimes he washes the temple or the dishes—whatever he does, he does not let a single moment pass without devoting his activities to Kṛṣṇa. Such action is in full *samādhi*.

17.1

arjuna uvāca
ye śāstra-vidhim utsṛjya
yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
teṣāṁ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa
sattvam āho rajas tamaḥ

Arjuna inquired: O Kṛṣṇa, what is the situation of those who do not follow the principles of scripture but worship according to their own imagination? Are they in goodness, in passion or in ignorance?

PURPORT: In the Fourth Chapter, thirty-ninth verse, it is said that a person faithful to a particular type of worship gradually becomes elevated to the stage of knowledge and attains the highest perfectional stage of peace and prosperity. In the Sixteenth Chapter, it is concluded that one who does not follow the principles laid down in the scriptures is called an *asura*, demon, and one who follows the scriptural injunctions faithfully is called a *deva*, or demigod. Now, if one, with faith, follows some rules which are not mentioned in the scriptural injunctions, what is his position? This doubt of Arjuna's is to be cleared by Kṛṣṇa. Are those who create some sort of God by selecting a human being and placing their faith in him worshiping in goodness, passion or ignorance? Do such persons attain the perfectional stage of life? Is it possible for them to be situated in real knowledge and elevate themselves to the highest perfectional stage? Do those who do not follow the rules and regulations of the scriptures but who have faith in something and worship gods and demigods and men attain success in their effort? Arjuna is putting these questions to Kṛṣṇa.

17.2

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
tri-vidhā bhavati śraddhā
dehināṁ sā svabhāva-jā
sāttvikī rājasī caiva
tāmasī ceti tām śṛṇu

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: According to the modes of nature acquired by the embodied soul, one's faith can be of three kinds—in goodness, in passion or in ignorance. Now hear about this.

PURPORT: Those who know the rules and regulations of the scriptures but out of laziness or indolence give up following these rules and regulations are governed by the modes of material nature. According to their previous activities in the mode of goodness, passion or ignorance, they acquire a nature which is of a specific quality. The association of the living entity with the different modes of nature has been going on perpetually; since the living entity is in contact with material nature, he acquires different types of mentality according to his association with the material modes. But this nature can be changed if one associates with a bona fide spiritual master and abides by his rules and the scriptures. Gradually, one can change his position from ignorance to goodness, or from passion to goodness. The conclusion is that blind faith in a particular mode of nature cannot help a person become elevated to the perfectional stage. One has to consider things carefully, with intelligence, in the association of a bona fide spiritual master. Thus one can change his position to a higher mode of nature.

17.3

*sattvānurīpā sarvaśya**śraddhā bhavati bhārata**śraddhā-mayo 'yaṁ puruṣo**yo yac-chraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ*

O son of Bharata, according to one's existence under the various modes of nature, one evolves a particular kind of faith. The living being is said to be of a particular faith according to the modes he has acquired.

PURPORT: Everyone has a particular type of faith, regardless of what he is. But his faith is considered good, passionate or ignorant according to the nature he has acquired. Thus, according to his particular type of faith, one associates with certain persons. Now the real fact is that every living being, as is stated in the Fifteenth Chapter, is originally a fragmental part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. Therefore one is originally transcendental to all the modes of material nature. But when one forgets his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead and comes into contact with the material nature in conditional life, he generates his own position by association with the different varieties of material nature. The resultant artificial faith and existence are only material. Although one may be conducted by some impression, or some conception of life, originally he is *nirguṇa*, or transcendental. Therefore one has to become cleansed of the material contamination that he has acquired, in order to regain his relationship with the Supreme Lord. That is the only path back without fear: Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If one is situated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then that path is guaranteed for his elevation to the perfectional stage. If one does not take to this path of self-realization, then he is surely to be conducted by the influence of the modes of nature.

The word *śraddhā*, or “faith,” is very significant in this verse. *Śraddhā*, or faith, originally comes out of the mode of goodness. One’s faith may be in a demigod or some created God or some mental concoction. One’s strong faith is supposed to be productive of works of material goodness. But in material conditional life, no works are completely purified. They are mixed. They are not in pure goodness. Pure goodness is transcendental; in purified goodness one can understand the real nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As long as one’s faith is not completely in purified goodness, the faith is subject to contamination by any of the modes of material nature. The contaminated modes of material nature expand to the heart. Therefore according to the position of the heart in contact with a particular mode of material nature, one’s faith is established. It should be understood that if one’s heart is in the mode of goodness his faith is also in the mode of goodness. If his heart is in the mode of passion, his faith is also in the mode of passion. And if his heart is in the mode of darkness, illusion, his faith is also thus contaminated. Thus we find different types of faith in this world, and there are different types of religions due to different types of faith. The real principle of religious faith is situated in the mode of pure goodness, but because the heart is tainted we find different types of religious principles. Thus according to different types of faith, there are different kinds of worship.

17.13

vidhi-hīnam asṛṣṭānnam
mantra-hīnam adakṣiṇam
śraddhā-virahitam yajñam
tāmasam paricakṣate

Any sacrifice performed without regard for the directions of scripture, without distribution of *prasādam* [spiritual food], without chanting of Vedic hymns and remunerations to the priests, and without faith is considered to be in the mode of ignorance.

PURPORT: Faith in the mode of darkness or ignorance is actually faithlessness. Sometimes people worship some demigod just to make money and then spend the money for recreation, ignoring the scriptural injunctions. Such ceremonial shows of religiosity are not accepted as genuine. They are all in the mode of darkness; they produce a demoniac mentality and do not benefit human society.

17.17

śraddhayā parayā taptam
tapas tat tri-vidham naraiḥ
aphalākāṅkṣibhir yuktaiḥ
sāttvikam paricakṣate

This threefold austerity, performed with transcendental faith by men not expecting material benefits but engaged only for the sake of the Supreme, is called austerity in goodness.

18.71

*śraddhāvān anasūyaś ca
śṛṇuyād api yo naraḥ
so 'pi muktaḥ śubhāl lokān
prāpnuyāt puṇya-karmaṇām*

And one who listens with faith and without envy becomes free from sinful reactions and attains to the auspicious planets where the pious dwell.

Appendix 4 — Assuming responsibility of being guru

A Lecture in Vṛndāvana by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

We have taken upon ourselves the responsibility of welcoming this grave charge. All the audience have accepted ordinary seats, I alone have been provided with a lofty seat. All are being told in effect—”Do have a look at a big animal from the Zoo-gardens. What arrogance! So foolish! So wicked! Have you ever seen such a big brute? Garlands of flowers have been put round his neck! What laudations! What bombastic long-drawn, and hyperbolic adjectives! And how complacently too he is listening to the praise of his own achievements, how intently, and with his own ears! He also evidently feels delighted in mind! Is he not acting in plain violation of the teaching of Mahāprabhu? Can such a big brute, so selfish and insolent, be ever reclaimed from brutishness?”

I happen to be one of the greatest of fools. No one offers me good advice on account of my arrogance. Inasmuch as nobody condescends to instruct me I placed my case before Mahāprabhu Himself. The thought occurred to me that I would make over the charge of myself to Him and see what He would advise me to do. Then Śrī Caitanyadeva said to me:

“Whom-so-ever thou meet'st, instruct him regarding Kṛṣṇa, By My command being Guru deliver this land; In this thou wilt not be obstructed by the current of the world; Thou wilt have My company once again at this place.”

In these verses is to be found the proper explanation of the apparent inconsistency noticed above.

He whose only teaching is humility greater than that of a blade of grass, said—”By My command being guru save this land!” In this instance Mahāprabhu Himself has given the command. His command being “Perform the duty of the guru, even as I do it Myself. Also convey this command to whom-so-ever you chance to meet.” Caitanyadeva says, “Tell them these very words, viz. By My command being Guru save this land. Deliver the people from their foolishness.” Now who-so-ever happens to hear these words would naturally protest with palms joined—”But I am really a great sinner; how can I be Guru? You are Godhead Himself, the Teacher of the world. You can be Guru.” To this Mahāprabhu replies:

“In this thou will not be obstructed by the current of the world; Thou wilt have My company once again at this place.”

“Do not practice the craft of a guru for the purpose of injuring others through malice. Do not adopt the trade of a guru in order to get immersed in the slough of this world. But if you can, indeed, be My guileless servant you will be endowed with My power—then you need not fear.”

I have no fear. My *gurudeva* has heard this from his *gurudeva*. And it is for this reason that my *gurudeva* has accepted even such a great sinner as myself and has told me: “By My command being guru save this land.” It is only those who have never heard these words of Gaursundara who say “How odd! To listen to one’s own praise!” While the guru is instructing his disciple in the eleventh Skandha of the *Bhāgavatam* what a great sin, in their opinion, is he not perpetuating! What is the *ācārya* to do when he has to explain the *śloka*, *ācārya mām vijaniyat*: Never disregard the *ācārya*; never entertain the idea that the *ācārya* is your equal in any sense.” These are the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself by which the *jīva* is to be benefitted. Is the guru to take himself off, to desert his seat—the seat of the *ācārya*—from which these words are to be explained? That office his *gurudeva* has conferred on him. If he does not act up to its requirements he is doomed to perdition by reason of his offense against the holy Name in the shape of disrespect towards the guru. He has to do it in spite of the fact that such procedure is apparently open to the charge of egoism.

When the guru imparts the mantram to the disciple should he not tell him by this mantram to worship the guru? Should he say instead, “Give the guru a few strokes of the shoe or the horse-whip?” The guru is never to be decried. The guru is the abode of all the gods. Should the *gurudeva* abstain from communicating these words to his disciple while reading the *Bhāgavatam* to him? “To him alone who possesses guileless spiritual devotion, similar to the transcendental devotion that is due to Kṛṣṇa Himself, to the *gurudeva*, the holy mysteries are manifested.” Is the *gurudeva* not to tell these things to his disciples? *Athau gurupūja*: the worship of the guru has precedence over all others.” The guru is to be served just as Kṛṣṇa is served. The guru is to be worshiped in a particular way. Is the guru to desert his seat without telling all these things to the disciple? In the angle there is always the defect in the shape of absence of the fullness, the evenness of level, of 180 degrees or of 360 degrees. But in the plain surface, in 360 degrees, there is no such defect. That in the emancipated state no defect is possible, this simple truth ordinary foolish people entirely fail to grasp.

As the saying goes, “Having started on the dance it is no use to draw close the veil.” I am doing the duty of the guru, but if I preach that no one should shout “Jai” to me, that is to say, if I say in a round about way, “Sing Jai to me,” it would be nothing short of duplicity. Our *Gurudeva* has not taught us such insincerity. Mahāprabhu has not taught such insincerity. I have to serve God in the straightforward way. The word of God has come down to the *gurudeva*; I have to obey it in all sincerity. I will not disrespect the guru at the instance of any foolish or malicious sectarians. Especially as Śrī *Gurudeva* has directed me saying, “By My command being guru save this land.” This command has my *gurudeva* preached. My *gurudeva* in his turn has conveyed the command to me. I will not be guilty of any insincerity in carrying out that command. In this matter I will not accept the

ideal of ignorant, insincere, pseudo-ascetic sectarianism. I will not learn insincerity. The worldly-minded, the malicious, the pseudo-renunciators, the selfish cannot understand how the devotees of God, spurning at everything of this world by command of God, never, not even for a second, deviate from the service of God through all the twenty-four hours.

Hypocritical sectarians, pseudo-Vaiṣṇava sects, those sects that cherish internally the longing for earthly fame, naturally enough think “What a shame it is for one to listen to the eulogies of disciples occupying the seat of the guru.” But every Vaiṣṇava regards everyone of the Vaiṣṇava as the object of his veneration. When Ṭhākura Haridāsa exhibits the attitude of humility Mahāprabhu says—”You are the greatest of the world, the crest-jewel of the world. Be agreeable, let us have our meal together.” He carried in His arms the body of Ṭhākura Haridāsa which is eternally existent, self-conscious and full of spiritual bliss. In the community that follows Śrī Rūpa, the qualities of desiring no honor for oneself and of readiness to duly honor others are fully present. Those who detect any disparity are, like the owl, blind while the sun shines. They commit an offense by such conduct.

If I disobey the law which has come down to me through the chain of preceptorial succession, the offense due to omission to carry out the command of the guru will sever me from the lotus-feet of Śrī *Gurudeva*. If in order to carry out the command of the Vaiṣṇava guru I have to be arrogant, to be brutish, to suffer eternal perdition, I am prepared to welcome such eternal damnation and even sign a pact to that effect. I will not listen to the words of other malicious persons in lieu of the command of the *gurudeva*. I will dissipate with indomitable courage and conviction the currents of thought of all the rest of the world, relying on the strength derived from the lotus feet of Śrī *Gurudeva*. I confess to this arrogance. By sprinkling a particle of the pollen of the lotus-feet of my Preceptor crores of people like you will be saved. There is no such learning in this world, no such sound reasoning in all the fourteen worlds, in no man-gods, that can weigh more than a solitary particle of the dust of the lotus-feet of my *gurudeva*. *Gurudeva* in whom I have implicit trust can never spite me. I am by no means prepared to listen to the words of any one who wants to hurt me or to accept such a malicious person as my perceptor.

Appendix 5 — Initiation

The following article is an adaptation of a small English treatise written by His Divine Grace Om Vishnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya Ashtottara-shata Shri Shrimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaj Prabhupada. He penned the original document in the year 442 of the Chaitanya Era, corresponding to December, 1928, on the western calendar.

The very same article was printed in that month and year within a Bengali newspaper containing topics on devotional service and the Absolute Truth.

The original treatise can still be found in various Gaudiya archives, under volume 26, number 7, of the *Shri Sajjana-toshani*.

This adaptation by Shri Kailasacandra das of the Vaishnava Foundation is not an effort to jump over or supersede the *acharya*. Rather it is an effort to glorify the *acharya* and his writing, which will always maintain its supreme superiority. A good many sentences of the adaptation are worded in this adaptation exactly as they were in the original. Many more sentences have been only very slightly altered from the original manuscript. The adaptation makes “changes” only in spelling, syntax and explanation. It does not—even slightly—change the meaning of any part of the original treatise, and it certainly does not change the meaning of the whole text in any way whatsoever. This adaptation is simply a humble effort by the author to make the original manuscript easier reading for the majority of interested Western devotees and spiritualists. A transcribed copy of the verbatim original is available upon request. If even one person benefits from this adaptation, then we will consider our efforts worthwhile. so *'ham vah sravayisyami yathadhitam yatha-mati* “Now I shall let you hear the very same thing, to the degree of my realization, just as I learned it.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.44)

Initiation into spiritual life

The ceremony of *diksha*, or initiation, is that by which the Spiritual Preceptor admits one to the status of a neophyte on the path of spiritual endeavor. The ceremony tends to confer spiritual enlightenment by abrogating sinfulness. Its actual effect depends on the degree of willing cooperation on the part of the disciple. It is, therefore, not the same in all cases. It does not preclude the possibility of the novice reverting to the non-spiritual state—if he slackens in his effort or misbehaves.

Initiation puts a person on the true track and also imparts an initial impulse to go ahead. It cannot, however, keep one going for Good unless one chooses to put forth his own voluntary effort. The nature of the initial impulse also varies in accordance with the condition of the recipient. Although the mercy of the Good Preceptor enables us to have a glimpse of the Absolute and of the path to His attainment, the seed thus sown requires very careful tending under the direction of the Preceptor. Only then will it germinate and grow into the fruit-and-shade-giving tree. After obtaining a working idea of his real nature, unless our soul, of his own accord, chooses to serve Krishna, he cannot long retain the Spiritual Vision. The soul is never compelled by Krishna to serve Him. Still, initiation is never altogether futile. It changes the disciple's outlook on life. If he sins after initiation, he may fall into greater depths of degradation than the uninitiated. Although, even after initiation, temporary setbacks may occur, they do not ordinarily prevent the final deliverance. The faintest glimmering of the real knowledge of the Absolute has sufficient power to radically change for Good our whole mental and physical constitution. This glimmering is incapable of being totally extinguished—except in extraordinarily unfortunate cases.

It is undoubtedly practical for the initiated—if only he is willing—to follow the directions of the Preceptor, leading, by slow degrees to the Absolute.

18\ Śraddhā—Fixing the Heart on the Truth

The Good Preceptor is verily the savior of fallen souls. It is, however, very rarely that a person, affected with modern culture, feels inclined to submit to the guidance of another. This is especially so in spiritual matters. But that very person will submit readily enough to the direction of a physician for being cured of bodily ailments. These ailments cannot be ignored without consequences which are self-evident to everybody. The evil that results from our neglect of the soul's ailments is of a nature that paralyzes and deludes our understanding, preventing recognitions of itself. Its gravity is not recognized, because it does not apparently stand in the way of our worldly activities, as do bodily ailments. The man of average culture is, therefore, at liberty to ask questions, despite the fact that he has not even realized his pressing necessity to have his spiritual maladies treated by the Really Competent Physician.

These are the questions which are frequently asked: "Why should it be at all necessary to submit to any particular person or to subscribe to any particular ceremony for the purpose of realizing the Absolute, since His nature is unconditioned? Why should Krishna require our formal declaration of submission to Himself? Would it not be more generous and logical to permit us to live a life of freedom in accordance with the principles of our perverted nature? Admitting that it is our duty to serve Krishna, why should we have to be introduced to Him by a third party? Why is it impossible for one to serve Śrī Krishna directly?"

It would no doubt be highly convenient and helpful to be instructed by a Good Preceptor, well-versed in the Scriptures, in order to understand those Scriptures. But one should ever submit to another in a way that may furnish a rascal with an opportunity of really doing harm. The bad preceptor is a familiar character. It is impossible to explain how such "gurus," who live openly in sin, can nevertheless contrive to retain the unquestioning allegiance of the cultured portion of their disciples.

This being the case, can we blame any person who hesitates to submit unconditionally to a preceptor, whether he is Good or bad? It is necessary, of course, to be quite sure of the bonafides of a person before we accept him—even tentatively—as our spiritual guide. A Preceptor should be a person who appears likely to possess those qualities which will enable him to improve our spiritual condition.

These, along with similar questions and thoughts, are likely to occur to most persons with an English education when they are asked to accept the help of any particular person as their Spiritual Preceptor. The literature, science, and art of the West pushes the principle of individual liberty and denounces the mentality which leads one to surrender the right of choosing his own course to some other superior person. Western culture inculcates the necessity and high value of having faith in oneself.

But the Good Preceptor claims our sincere and complete allegiance. The good disciple makes a complete surrender of himself at the feet of the Preceptor. The submission of the disciple is neither irrational nor blind.

It is complete, as long as the Preceptor himself continues to be altogether Good. The disciple retains the right of renouncing his allegiance to the Preceptor the moment the disciple is satisfied that the Preceptor has become a fallible creature like himself. Nor does a Good Preceptor accept anyone as his disciple unless the later is prepared to submit to him freely.

A Good Preceptor is duty-bound to renounce a disciple who is not sincerely willing to follow the Preceptor's instructions fully. If a preceptor accepts as his disciple one who refuses to be completely guided by him, or if a disciple submits to a preceptor who is not wholly Good, such preceptor and such disciple are both doomed to fall from their spiritual state.

No one is a Good Preceptor who has not realized the Absolute. One who has realized the Absolute is saved from the necessity of walking on the worldly path. The Good Preceptor lives the Spiritual Life and is, therefore, bound to be wholly Good. He should be wholly free from any desire for anything of this world, whether good or bad. The categories of good and bad do not exist in the Absolute. In the Absolute, everything is Good. In our present state, we can have no idea of this Absolute Goodness. Submission to the Absolute is not real unless it is also Absolute.

It is on the plane of the Absolute that the disciple is required to submit completely to the Good Preceptor. On the material plane, there can be no such thing as complete submission. The pretense of complete submission to the bad preceptor is responsible for the corruptions that are found in the relationship of the ordinary worldly guru and his equally worldly-minded disciples.

All honest thinkers will realize the logical acceptability of the position just set forth. But most persons will be disposed to believe that a Good Preceptor cannot be found in this world. This is really so. Both the Good Preceptor and his disciple belong to the Spiritual Realm. But spiritual discipleship is nevertheless capable of being realized by persons who belong to this world. Otherwise, there would be no religion at all in the world. Still, just because spiritual life happens to be within realization in this world, it does not mean worldly existence is capable of being improved into spiritual. As a matter of fact, the one is perfectly incompatible with the other. They are categorically different from one another. The Good Preceptor, although he appears to belong to this world, is not really of this world. No one who belongs to this world can deliver us from worldliness. The Good Preceptor is a denizen of the Spiritual World. He has been enabled, by the will of God, to appear in this world, in order to enable us to realize the spiritual existence.

The much-vaunted individual liberty is a figment of the diseased imagination. We are bound, willingly or unwillingly, to submit to the laws of God in the material as well as in the Spiritual World. The hankering for freedom to defy His laws is the cause of all our miseries. The total abnegation of all hankering for such freedom is the condition of admission into the Spiritual Realm. In this world, we desire this freedom but are compelled--against our will--to submit to the inexorable laws of physical nature. This is the unnatural state. Simply becoming unwilling to accept this forced submission from material nature does not qualify us for entrance into the Spiritual Realm. In this world, the moral principle indeed claims our willing submission. But morality is also a curtailment of freedom, although the peculiar circumstances of this world necessitate it.

The soul who does not belong to this world is in a state of open or court rebellion against submission to an alien domination. By his very constitution, he is capable of willingly submitting only to the Absolute.

The Good Preceptor asks the struggling soul to submit not to the laws of this world (which will only rivet its chains) but to the higher law of the Spiritual Realm. Due to the absence of complete conviction, the pretense of submission to the laws of the Spiritual Realm (with no intention of really carrying them out in practice) is often mistaken for genuine submission.

In this world, the fully-convinced state is non-existent. We are, therefore, compelled in all cases to act upon make-believes, viz., the so-called working hypotheses. We have learned this from our experience of this world.

The Good Preceptor tells us to change this method of activity. He invites us, first of all, to be really and fully informed of the nature and laws of the Other World. It happens to be eternally and categorically different from this phenomenal world.

If we do not sincerely submit to be instructed in the alphabets of eternal life, we are bound to remain where we are. We will go on perversely asserting (however unconsciously) our present processes and so-called convictions against the instructions of the Preceptor, even in the period of novitiate. This also will amount to the practical rejection of all Good advice, because the two worlds have nothing in common. At the same time, we naturally will fail to understand this. We will continue to always believe, in accordance with our accustomed methods, that we are, at any rate, PARTIALLY following the Preceptor. As a matter of fact, when we reserve the right of choice, we really follow ourselves.

Even when we seem to agree to follow the Preceptor, it is because he appears to be in agreement with ourselves. But, since the two worlds have absolutely nothing in common, we are only under a delusion when we suppose that we really understand the method or the object of the Preceptor--when we reserve the right to assert the apparent self.

Faith in the scriptures can alone help us in this otherwise impractical endeavor--believing in the Preceptor, with the help of the *shastras*, while understanding neither.

As soon as we are fully convinced of the necessity of submitting unambiguously to the Good Preceptor, it is then--and only then--that he is enabled to show us the way into the Spiritual World. He shows the way in accordance with the method laid down in the *shastras* for that purpose. He can apply that method properly, without perpetrating fatal blunder, since he himself happens to belong to the Realm of the Spirit.

The crux of the matter lies not in the external nature of the ceremony of initiation, as it appears to us. That is bound to be unintelligible to us, being an affair of the Other World. The crux of the matter lies in the conviction of the necessity of--and the successful choice of--a really Good Preceptor. We can attain to this conviction by the exercise of our unbiased reason in the light of our ordinary experience.

Once this conviction has been truly formed, Śrī Krishna Himself, in two ways, helps us in finding the really Good Preceptor. In the first place, He instructs us as regards the character and functions of a Good Preceptor through the revealed *Shastras*. In the second place, He Himself sends to us the Good Preceptor at the moment when we are likely to benefit by his instructions. The Good Preceptor also comes to us when we reject him. In such cases, also, it is certainly Krishna Who sends him to us—for no reason whatsoever.

Krishna has eternally revealed the tidings of the Spiritual Realm in the form of transcendental sounds which have been handed down in the records of the Spiritual Scriptures all over the world. The Spiritual Scriptures help all those who are prepared to exercise reason for the purpose of finding not the relative truth, but the Absolute Truth—and to find out the proper instructor in accordance with their directions. The only Good Preceptor is he who can make us really understand the Spiritual Scriptures. Those Scriptures enable us to realize the necessity for, and the nature of, submission to the processes laid down in them. But there is still every chance of foul play. A very clever man, or a magician, may pass himself off as a person who can properly explain the Scriptures by means of his greater knowledge or deceptive arts. It is very important, therefore, that we should be on our guard against such tricks. The scholar, as well as the magician, pretends to explain the Scriptures only in terms of the objects or happenings of this world. Conversely, the Scriptures themselves declare that they do not tell us at all about the things of this world.

Those who are liable to be deluded by the arts of perverted yogis persuade themselves into believing that the Spiritual is identical with the perversion, distortion, or defiance of the laws of physical nature. The laws of physical nature are not unreal. They govern the relation of all relative existences. In our present state, it is therefore always possible for another to possess the power or the knowledge to demonstrate the tentative character of what we choose to regard as our deepest convictions.

These powerful scholars or yogis merely expose the insufficiency or inapplicability of these convictions. But such surprises belong to the realm of the phenomenal; they have nothing to do with the Absolute.

Those who have an unspiritual partiality for scholarship or for magic fall into the clutches of such pseudo-religionists. Such unfortunate persons are victims of their own perversity. The serious plight of these victims will be realized from the fact that no one can be delivered from the state of ignorance simply by submitting to the force of compulsion in which a clever man keeps them under his own control. It is not possible to save the man who refuses on principle to listen to the voice of reason. The empirical and uninspired scholars are no exception to this rule.

When we actually feel the need of his guidance, the plain meaning of the *Shastras* should, therefore, be our only guide in the search of the Good Preceptor. The Scriptures have defined the Good Preceptor as one who himself leads the Spiritual Life. It is not any worldly qualifications which make the Good Preceptor. It is by unreserved submission to such a Preceptor that we can be helped to re-enter into the Realm that is our real home, but which, unfortunately, is unrecognizable to almost

all of us at present. Our body and our mind alike find it impossible to access that Realm, and this is the result of abusing our faculty of free reason in the diseased state, with the consequent accumulation of a killing load of worldly experiences—which we have learned to regard as the very stuff of our existence. OM TAT SAT.

Appendix 6 — Guru

Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā -- Hyderabad, August 19, 1976

So this is the guru's qualification. Guru does not show any magic or produce some wonderful things then he becomes guru. So practically I have done this. People are giving me credit that I have done miracles, but my miracle is that I carried the message of Caitanya Mahāprabhu: *yāre dekha tāre kaha kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa* [Cc. *Madhya* 7.128]. So this is the secrecy. So anyone of you, you can become guru. It is not that I am an extraordinary man, an extraordinary god coming from some mysterious place. It is not that—it is very simple thing. Caitanya Mahāprabhu says that *yāre dekha tāre kaha kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa* [Cc. *Madhya* 7.128]. So I request you follow the Caitanya Mahāprabhu's instruction that you also, you become a guru at your home. It is not that you have to make a gigantic show of becoming guru. The father has to become guru, the mother has to become guru. Actually, in the *sāstra* it is said one should not become father, one should not become mother if he does not become a guru to his children. Na *mocayed yaḥ samupeta-mṛtyum*. If a person is unable to save his child from the clutches of birth and death, he should not become a father.

Appendix 7 — Cleaning house and cleaning hearts: Reform and

Renewal in ISKCON (*Ravindra Svārūpa dāsa*)

A paper delivered at the VAISHNAVA ACADEMY conference held in Weisbaden, Germany in January 1994. Published in ISKCON Communications Journal, No. 3 (January-June 1994), 43-52 (Part 1) and No. 4 (July-December 1994), 25-33 (Part 2).

INTRODUCTION

In January, 1994 ISKCON in Germany—under threat of government repression as a “cult”—organized a Vaishnava Academy Conference in Wiesbaden, titled “Twenty-five Years of ISKCON in Germany.” The conference was attended not only by academics but also by state church functionaries who advise the German government on “the sect issue.” This essay by Ravindra Svarupa dasa —originally published in 1994 in ISKCON Communications Journal—is an expanded

version of his talk at that conference. In this paper, Ravindra Svarupa reflects in a self-critical fashion on a number of ISKCON's major failures and errors, such as institutionalized misogyny and the deviations of the "zonal-acarya" system. In a historical analysis, Ravindra Svarupa attempts to unearth the root cause of these anomalies, and he proposes that an honest acknowledgement of spiritual failure—on both an individual and an institutional level—is the key to real reform and progress.

IN 1971 I UNDERWENT the profoundly wrenching change of becoming a member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, leaving one life and embarking on another. I abandoned old associations to immerse myself totally in the life of a tight-knit temple commune; I radically restyled my exterior to complement my utterly changed interior. I became a stranger in my own land.

I undertook such an arduous passage because I was convinced that I was thereby effecting an ontological crossing: I was leaving the material dimension for the spiritual, awakening from the nightmare of history to the peace of eternity. ISKCON temples were embassies of the kingdom of God. Although apparently located in Maya's realm, they were under direct divine jurisdiction. There the powers of material conditioning and desire had no sway. This is what I believed.

Looking back at that younger self of mine—twenty-six years old at the time—I am appalled by his naiveté—"stupidity" would be appropriate—and at the same time awed by his sacrificial commitment. Foolish and ignorant though he was, I am more than ever convinced that, by the grace of God, he made the right choice. That decision of my younger self is indeed the spiritual capital on which I still live. My self-doubt, rather, is whether I would at this time have the courage to make such a decision, knowing what I know now.

What I know now, of course, is that transcendence is not so easily attained, that history does not so easily release us from its grasp. What I know now is that the line that separates the godly from the ungodly is not congruent with the line dividing ISKCON from non-ISKCON. I know now that, like most in this world, I am committed—in my case deeply committed—to an institution that has done things that make me appalled and ashamed.

I joined ISKCON in my youth, when ISKCON itself was new-born. Over the last quarter-century both of us have matured together. I can no longer be called by any stretch of the term a "youth," nor can ISKCON be called a "youth-religion." Through struggle and difficulty ISKCON has attained—has been forced to attain—concrete awareness of its own limitations, and has, on the institutional level, enacted structures of self-criticism and self-correction. I want to set before you what I think is the central problem ISKCON has faced in that struggle. That problem arises out of both the internal dynamics of its spiritual endeavor and of the historical situation in which it has found itself.

ISKCON aims at creating "pure devotees" of God, that is to say, people who serve God without any personal motive and without any interruption and who are free from all material desires. It is not thought in ISKCON that this is an ideal of which we must all, inevitably, fall short. On the contrary,

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ISKCON has the ability to present this ideal as a practical aim to its members and potential members in an extraordinarily vivid manner. Its members internalize this ideal for themselves, an ideal that demands an exacting and unremitting standard of purity in deeds, in words, in thought.

ISKCON says to people that pure devotional service, though an extremely elevated condition, is an attainable goal. Whenever ISKCON is powerful in recruiting new members and drawing from them a high level of commitment, it is because it can preach this with great confidence. People join and people remain because a very high ideal seems feasible of realization. Much of the power with which ISKCON is able to present this ideal as both a desirable and an achievable aim depends upon the concrete, physical presence of a successful devotee who functions as an exemplary model, a paradigmatic individual. This personage—the guru, or *acarya* (one who teaches by his own behavior), not only embodies the ideal for all to see, but also delivers the divine grace by which others can become similarly advanced. Thus the institution itself requires devotees who appear to have realized the ideals.

The problem for ISKCON has been to deal constructively with its own failures to live up to its ideals. Many more people have been attracted to the principles of Krishna consciousness than are actually able to follow them. Its more public shortcomings or scandals have resulted from a somewhat protracted refusal or inability to recognize its problems. In the minds of many devotees, they were simply not supposed to happen.

The difficulty for ISKCON was exacerbated from the beginning, however, by the marginal social position of most of the early recruits. They were very young and very alienated, and in joining ISKCON they became double dropouts—from mainstream society into the counterculture, from the counterculture into ISKCON. At the same time, certain attitudes of the 60s counterculture were retained and became part of the unofficial culture of ISKCON.

“Easy and Sublime”

When A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami—known later by the honorific title “Srila Prabhupada”—began preaching in New York City in the second half of the 60s, he characterized Krishna consciousness by a hendiadys that became something of a catchphrase: Krishna consciousness, he said, is “simultaneously easy and sublime.” The combination seems unlikely, for the easy is usually common and ordinary, and the sublime, difficult of realization. Yet in presenting this unlikely conjunction, Srila Prabhupada was quite faithfully representing his received Vaishnava (monotheistic, devotional) tradition from India.

That tradition, called “Gaudiya Vaishnavism,” had attained its distinctive identity in sixteenth century Bengal, as a reformed branch of a much older Vaishnava tradition. This reformation was the achievement of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu (1486-1533). Somewhat like his European contemporary, Martin Luther, Mahāprabhu stressed a direct, intimately personal relationship with God, unmediated by the traditional priestly offices and ritual formularies; and Mahāprabhu was vigorous in extending this relationship to everyone, even the outcastes, the untouchables, and the fallen.

These two tendencies were consonant with Vaishnava tradition in general. Vaishnavism had always propounded, as the highest salvation, a relationship with a transcendent person, whom it viewed as ontologically higher than the undifferentiated Brahman attained by a mysticism of negation (*Bhagavad-gita* 14.27). And Vaishnavism had always extended spiritual enfranchisement to traditionally disenfranchised people (*Bhagavad-gita* 9.32). Mahaprabhu developed both tendencies further. He taught, and practiced, the process of entering into a relationship with God in his most private and confidential feature.

According to Gaudiya Vaishnava theology, God has both a public and a private face. When he manifests his power and majesty (*aisvarya*), he is known as Narayana and is served perforce in awe and reverence. However, when he sets aside his lordship, and allows his beauty and sweetness (*madhurya*) to overpower his majesty, he is known as Krishna, the all-attractive. In order to enjoy intimate exchanges of love, Krishna causes his confidential devotees to forget that he is God, so that they may serve him in a fraternal, parental, or conjugal mood. The attainment of such intimate service, Chaitanya taught, is the highest achievement of spiritual life. That achievement was not at all relegated to a future life: pure devotees could fully experience such ecstatic relationships even in this existence. The correct practice of devotional service results in direct experience of the divine (*paresanubhava*) (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 11.2.42). The person of Mahaprabhu himself underwent the extreme physiological alterations (*sattvika-bhava*) that accompany such ecstasies. The other side of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's endeavor was to extend this relationship with Krishna to all, including those considered degraded and uncultured by birth or habit. Some of his most prominent followers came from beyond the pale of orthodox Hinduism. For instance, Thakura Haridasa, whom Chaitanya made the exemplar (*acarya*) of chanting the divine names, was born a Muslim, and his great lieutenants Sanatana and Rupa Goswami had become outcastes by serving as ministers in the Turkish government of Hussain Shah. This liberality was an affront to the position and prerogatives of the hereditary caste Brahmins, who were shown scriptural text that stated, for example, that a pure devotee, no matter how low-born, is superior to the most well-qualified, but non-devoted, Brahmin (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 7.9.10).

Mahaprabhu could justify his liberal policy by citing Vaishnava texts that claimed the practices of devotional service to possess such spiritual power as to elevate untouchables (*sva-paca*) (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 3.33.7) and aboriginal peoples (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 2.4.18) to the highest position of Vedic culture. Furthermore, the specific devotional practice of congregational chanting of the names of God, which Chaitanya made the centerpiece of his reform movement, is natural and pleasing and requires no prior qualification whatsoever. Yet it possesses immense purifying potency.

Thus Chaitanya Mahaprabhu offered direct entry into what amounts to the private life of God, and, by virtue of a process practicable by all, could liberally extend that offer to the low as well as the high, the ignorant as well as the learned, the unworthy as well as the worthy, the fallen as well as the saved. All this Srila Prabhupada encapsulated in his conjunction "easy and sublime."

However, it must be stressed that “easy” did not mean “cheap.” The “easy” process was supposed to make one fully qualified for the sublime position. The verifiable symptom of advancement in chanting is the disappearance of lust, greed, and anger from the heart; full qualification for the higher stages of devotional service is complete absence of all material desires (*virakti*). For example, the conjugal pastimes of Krishna cannot be understood by anyone still affected by mundane sexual desire. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s liberality did not stop him from enforcing very strict standards of conduct among his followers.

This particular mixture of elements, transmitted quite faithfully by Srila Prabhupada to America, did much to determine the inner tensions that produced the dynamic of ISKCON’s development in the West.

Preaching to “White Aborigines”

The demotic thrust of Vaishnava teaching provided theological justification for Srila Prabhupada’s coming to the West—for, by orthodox Hindu standards, all Westerners are ipso facto untouchables. Even so, Srila Prabhupada had initially envisioned his mission as directed toward the West’s political and cultural elite. Several years before his missionary journey, Srila Prabhupada had written in his English translation and commentary on *Srimad-Bhagavatam* [League of Devotees: Vrindaban and Delhi, 1962], that the work was “a cultural presentation for the re-spiritualization of the entire human society,” “meant for bringing about a revolution in the impious life of a misdirected civilization of the world.” At that time, however, he envisioned such a cultural revolution as coming from above:

We are confident if the transcendental message of *Srimad Bhagavatam* is received only by the leading men of the world, certainly there will be a change of heart and naturally the people in general will follow them. The mass [of] people in general are so to say tools in the hands of the modern politicians and leaders of the people. If there is a change of heart of the leaders only, certainly there will be a radical change in the atmosphere of the world situation [sic].

As it turned out, the American establishment proved quite immune to the attractions of Krishna consciousness, but Srila Prabhupada unexpectedly found a sympathetic reception among the hippies—“the spoiled children of society,” as he once called them (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 4.12.23, purport)—who had emerged as a group in the year of Srila Prabhupada’s arrival. Srila Prabhupada was often to note that the hippies were “our best customers” (Letters to Gaurasundara dasa, 1969, and to Satsvarupa dasa, 1971), “immediate candidates of our Krishna Consciousness” (letter to Govinda dasi, 1969). The reason for such receptivity, according to Srila Prabhupada, was that “the youth in the West have reached the stage of vairagya, or renunciation. They are practically disgusted by material pleasure from material sources” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 6.16.26, purport).

In a 1971 *Bhagavad-gita* lecture Srila Prabhupada said that “these American boys” are fed up with this materialistic way of life. They want something spiritual. But because there is no such information, there is no such leader, they are becoming hippies, frustrated and confused. And

because here is something substantial, they are taking it. This is the secret of success of this Krishna Consciousness movement.

In spite of having “reached renunciation,” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 6.16.26, purport), American youth, for want of spiritual direction, disastrously took refuge in sex and drugs. The hippies appeared to Srila Prabhupada as “morose” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 4.25.11, purport), “distressed,” “wretched,” “unclean,” “without shelter or food,” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 4.25.5, purport), “irresponsible and unregulated” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 5.6.10, purport), “lying idle, without any production,” (*Bhagavad-gita* lecture, 1976), and so on. While the counterculture at one point made something of an icon of Srila Prabhupada, he himself remained vigorously opposed to its standards and practices and frequently exhorted his followers to renounce all allegiance to it. This, for example is from a letter of 1969 to Hayagriva dasa:

Anyway, we should be very much careful [not] to publish anything in our paper which will give impression to the public that we are inclined to the hippy [sic] movement. In our papers nothing should be published which has even a small tinge of hippy ideas. I must tell you in this connection that if you have any sympathies with the hippy movement you should kindly give it up.

It is surprising that Gaudiya Vaishnavism could have been transplanted into the modern West at all. Yet it should not be surprising—especially to those acquainted with the history of religions—that its earliest American followers should have largely been drawn from radically marginalized and alienated youth. Although Srila Prabhupada may have hoped for a hearing from the establishment, he accepted the receptivity of the hippies as providential, and relied on the potency of the holy name, vigorously preached, to achieve the requisite effect. And, indeed, the movement increased with extraordinary rapidity.

It may seem strange that someone like Prabhupada, with a message so essentially traditional and conservative, should have attracted such radicalized youth. What was his appeal? His sustained and systematic critique of modern material civilization, undertaken from a spiritual perspective, resonated strongly with his young hearers’ own disillusionment. But the deep attraction, in my judgment, was Srila Prabhupada’s ability to implant in us an extraordinary hope: He was able to establish the ideal of sainthood as a viable goal of life, a practical vocational aim. Young western men and women became convinced that they could attain direct experience of God in this life. Srila Prabhupada made it very clear that such an achievement demands an uncompromising standard of purity, and yet his followers became convinced that, in spite of their own past actions and present conditioning, they could be elevated under Srila Prabhupada’s tutelage to that requisite standard of purity.

Srila Prabhupada’s success in establishing his beachhead in the counterculture soon produced problems within his movement. His early followers were young, immature, untrained, and inexperienced. Many of them had suffered mental, moral, and spiritual disorders as a result of their sojourn in the counterculture, if not in post-war America itself. In short, Srila Prabhupada constructed his movement out of dubious raw material. He was convinced that his efforts were a matter of spiritual life or death, and he was animated by a sense of extreme urgency. In a raging storm one

must construct a shelter with whatever comes to hand. Later, architects may criticize. Indeed, Srila Prabhupada knew very well the defects of his handiwork. In the mid seventies, a certain ISKCON leader showed me a letter that Srila Prabhupada had sent him. As I recall it, Srila Prabhupada, writing about his difficulties in managing his movement, had made the striking statement: “Krishna did not send me any first-class men. He sent me only second and third-class men.” Another leader told me Srila Prabhupada had written to him in nearly identical language. (I should note that I have not been able to find either letter in the present archive collection of Srila Prabhupada’s correspondence.)

The movement’s early explosive growth created a further problem. New people, without much material or spiritual maturity or even training, had to assume positions of leadership and responsibility. For example, I moved into the temple in Philadelphia in January, 1971, and by October I had been made President, with twelve or fifteen devotees under my material and spiritual care. My qualifications were that I was a bit older than everyone else, that I had held down regular jobs, that I had three years of post-graduate education. But I had never managed anything or anyone, and spiritually I was still very much occupied with my own struggles. The disciplined world of spiritual life was completely new to me, and I was only beginning to absorb the heritage Srila Prabhupada was giving us. But there was no one else to do the job, so I received on-the-job training with no immediate trainer.

I can hardly remember my performance without shuddering. I think that this was rather typical of ISKCON at the time.

Another difficulty arose from the inter-generational warfare of that era. A contempt for society and its institutions was a countercultural trait that was absorbed into ISKCON in the early days (and in some parts remained for a long time). As a result, devotees were often unnecessarily hostile to and confrontational with established authorities, (including their own parents); when those authorities responded in kind, it only confirmed one’s worst estimation. In some cases, the countercultural hostility became combined with elements extracted from Krishna conscious philosophy to produce a virulent antinomianism—something you will hardly find in, say, the *Bhagavad-gita*. This antinomianism later produced the disaster in the West Virginia New Vrindavan community.

Yet with all these early difficulties the movement still grew and developed, and even in the most trying times an extraordinary degree of spiritual discipline was available to those who sought it. One could say, in retrospect, that Srila Prabhupada should have put the brakes on the expansion of his movement, held back his preaching, until his leaders could be properly trained by him. One could say that he was doing a very risky thing. I am sure he knew the risks, but from his perspective it would have been inconceivable not to respond as energetically as possible to the God-given opportunity to save souls. The positive results would be eternal, the bad temporary. For my own part, I am deeply grateful for the risk he took in allowing the rapid expansion of ISKCON with all its attendant hazards and shortcomings. It saved me.

Dealing with Spiritual Failure

It seemed to his early followers that Srila Prabhupada offered them something unavailable in the religions they had been raised in. He offered direct spiritual experience of God (*vijnana*, or “realized” knowledge), as opposed to mere doctrinal or “book” knowledge (*jnana*). *Bhakti* yoga is a spiritual discipline that aims to alter or “purify” consciousness through deliberate cultivation so that the divine can eventually become directly present to it, become a reality of immediate perception (*pratyaksa*. See *Bhagavad-gita* 9.2). This systematic aim at experiential results gives *bhakti* yoga a common feature with modern material science, and indeed Srila Prabhupada often used the word “science” to translate “vijnana”. As the title of a popular ISKCON book puts it, *bhakti* yoga is “The Science of Self Realization.”

The practice of the science of self realization requires that one make oneself the subject of an experiment in the progressive purification of consciousness, an experiment that entails a fairly rigorous program of spiritual practices (*sadhana*) which includes rising each day before dawn to spend the first four or five hours in intense devotional exercises (“the morning program”). During this time, two hours is set aside for individual chanting on beads in fulfillment of a daily commitment to repeat the Hare Krishna mantra in this way, 1,728 times as a minimum.

Furthermore, one has to strictly observe four prohibitions. The first prohibition against eating meat, fish, or eggs means, in its most rigorous understanding, that one ought really to eat only food that has been sanctified by first being prepared for and offered to Krishna. The prohibition against taking intoxication means eschewing even the milder anodynes like tea and chocolate. The injunction not to gamble is meant to exclude participating not only in wagering and games of chance but also in time wasting diversions like sports, cinema, television, and so on. Finally, the injunction against illicit sex forbids not only sex outside of wedlock, but even within marriage if it is not exclusively intended for procreation; for that purpose, sex can be engaged in one time in a month, within the period of the woman’s fertility. The goal is to get through life with a minimum of involvement in sex, and not only in deed, but in speech and thought as well. Srila Prabhupada called these rules “the regulative principles of freedom” (*Bhagavad-gita* 2.64, purport). He made it starkly clear that self realization and sense gratification are mutually exclusive, and he refused to compromise on this matter. His followers tended to attribute the lifeless, dispirited condition of the routinized religions of their childhood precisely to institutional accommodations to sense gratification. Consequently, the very stringency of ISKCON’s regulative principles became to many a hallmark of ISKCON’s validity and acted as an attractive, rather than repellent, factor.

In addition, the emphasis on stringent practice was closely linked in the movement to a charismatic outpouring of enthusiasm, manifest especially in *sankirtana*, group chanting of the names of God while dancing to the rhythm of drums and cymbals, either within a temple or in public places. This central practice—*sankirtana* is said to be the yuga dharma, or dispensation for this age—illustrates the ability of devotional activities to produce an intense concentration of consciousness through the expressive engagement of the senses and feelings—a fundamental

principle of *bhakti* yoga. The compelling energy generated by *sankirtana*, which easily engenders a contagious enthusiasm and a sense of exaltation, is greatly boosted in the participants by the affective channeling caused by the asceticism of the regulative principles. Conversely, the ability of devotional activities like *sankirtana* and Deity worship (*arcana*) to engage one's feelings and senses can make adherence to the principles not an exercise in barren abnegation but rather a natural displacement of material activities by spiritual ones.

At any rate, not only did young people vigorously commit themselves to the regulative principles of Krishna consciousness with great self confidence, but they also rallied around the principles as a kind of shibboleth, a distinctive validating feature of ISKCON that set it apart both from other, competing new religious movements from the East and from the mainstream denominations of the West.

From the beginning, ISKCON has excelled in causing its members to internalize an extremely high ideal: that of a “pure devotee of Krishna,” one totally engaged in God's service without any personal motive and without interruption. Such a standard was visibly exemplified in Srila Prabhupada himself, an *acarya*, or model for all to follow. Initiated devotees, who must strictly observe the regulative principles, are to conform themselves to the standard of a pure devotee, if not out of spontaneous love for God, at least out of dutiful obedience to the command of scripture and guru.

It is only natural to expect that it would take a great and often protracted struggle for young men and women, raised in the lax and increasingly permissive moral climate of urbanized, secular America, to live up to their newly adopted standard. Yet in the early culture of ISKCON such difficulties were not to be easily acknowledged. The shibbolethic role played by the regulative principles, and the fact that taking initiation vows was the only acceptable means of socialization within ISKCON, made strict following of the regulative principles a sine qua non of allegiance to Srila Prabhupada. At the same time, members who were themselves fairly new looked for validation by seeking and producing swift conversions, conversions that entailed, in the devotee's mind, a complete break with outside society and total immersion with the culture of an ISKCON temple. Naturally, the temples became filled with premature and tentative candidates, who were under great internal and external pressure to profess a degree of commitment far in excess of the reality. Further, a lack of mature devotees, who had passed successfully through the trials of spiritual development, left most of the movement without experienced practical guides and counselors. All these factors combined to produce in the movement an inability to deal in a healthy and constructive manner with the spiritual failings and failures of its members. Those problems could hardly even be acknowledged, let alone discussed.

The climate of ISKCON in those days strongly discouraged any frank and open confession of difficulty in following the principles. This was true not only on the institutional level, but quite often on the personal one as well. For example, when soon after joining the temple I confided my own normal problem in a slightly senior devotee, hoping for some forgiveness, practical advice,

sympathy, and encouragement, my confessor showed alarm, astonishment and anger; becoming aloof and stern, he simply delivered the judgment that I “could not be a devotee.” Such experiences seemed to have been all too typical. Concealment became the dominant mode of reaction. Devotees became isolated from each other, and real fellowship was baffled. The various forms of concealment that are the unfortunate by product of any religious group with a high demand for sanctity surfaced within ISKCON: bluffing, hypocrisy, intolerance, fanaticism, punctiliousness, fault finding, and the substitution of minor for major virtues. (I take this list from Anton T. Boisen, *The Exploration of the Inner World*. Harper and Brothers, 1936), p. 148.)

A steady stream of devotees joined the movement, and a steady stream left. In ISKCON jargon, they “blooped,” fell back into illusion. All too often the exit scenario went something like this: A devotee would simply disappear, without any forewarning, in the middle of the night. Sometimes this removal would be preceded by a period of withdrawal and depression, but often there would be no clue at all. A close inquiry would subsequently disclose a few devotees who had ascertained that the “blooped” devotee had been having problems following the principles. He could not bring himself to admit it, and his sense of isolation and guilt drove him in silence from the community.

In the early days, each such departure tended to create a community crisis. It rocked the faith of many members, whose own hold on Krishna consciousness was none too strong. Sometimes the temple members covertly envied the “blooped” devotee. At any rate, the community reacted to the departure as to a betrayal. Usually a communal post mortem would spontaneously take place, in which the faults and shortcomings of the departed devotee were analyzed and condemned to the point at which the remaining members felt more secure about themselves and their values.

To the bewilderment and, frequently, annoyance of the temple residents, many “blooped” devotees did not utterly vanish. They would instead establish some sort of contact with a temple member; they would become part of a social network of other former temple residents. They would show up regularly at the Sunday feast and other public functions. They were always about, just on the periphery: I remember one temple resident who referred to them as “the shadow of ISKCON.” In ISKCON’s jargon these liminal persons were called “fringies,”—a term, by the way, one now rarely hears. Because of the anger and resentment many temple devotees felt toward the “fringies,” the treatment they received was often unfriendly, and they were subject to cutting or sarcastic remarks of the temple residents. At best, the temple devotees were indifferent, because “you could not preach to fringies.” Preaching meant in this context to persuade someone to join the temple community, and the fringies were inoculated against such appeals.

They maintained an allegiance to Krishna consciousness, but had stabilized themselves on what the temple residents considered an unsatisfactory platform, for the most part compromising to some degree with one or more of the regulative principles and participating in a reduced or irregular program of devotional activities. Over the years the population of fringies steadily increased, but ISKCON leaders and temple devotees did not acknowledge any duties or obligations toward them, nor concede much validity to their continuing allegiance. They represented failure, and the

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establishment wanted simply to disown them. Only over the last five or seven years, at different rates in different locations, has the ISKCON leadership began to acknowledge the “fringies” as “our people,” as a genuine congregation to whom the temple should minister. The belated recognition of a congregation illustrates the unwillingness to confront the fact of a wide spread failure of its member to maintain a long term commitment to its own standards of spiritual purity. But the movement as a whole was forced to face the problem when the fall down of a number of senior members who had taken on the role of initiating gurus after Srila Prabhupada’s passing away in 1977 finally led to a crisis.

All these gurus were *sannyasis*, those who had taken final and supposedly irrevocable vows of celibacy and renunciation, and their fall from the standards became the crowning event in what had been a continuing failure rate of those who had taken *sannyasa* vows, a rate that approached 90%. In 1969, three householder couples (*grhasthas*) very successfully launched the Hare Krishna movement in London. Impressed by the way that householders could preach, Srila Prabhupada encouraged marriage as a matter of policy. He explains his position in this 1971 Bombay *Bhagavad-gītā* lecture (March 29):

Om Visnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacarya Asttotara Sata Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Maharaja Prabhupada [Srila Prabhupada’s spiritual master]: He was creating more *brahmacaris* and *sannyasis* for preaching work, but I am creating more *grhasthas* [applause], because in Europe and America the boys and girls intermingle so quickly and intimately that it is very difficult to keep one *brahmacari*. So there is no need of artificial *brahmacaris*.... So married life is called *grhastha asrama*. It is as good as *sannyasa asrama*. *Asrama* means where there is *bhagavad bhajana* [glorification of God]. It doesn’t matter whether one is *sannyasi* or one is *grhastha* or a *brahmacari*. The main principle is *bhagavad bhajana*. But practically also, I may inform you that these married couples, they are helping me very much....For practical example, I may say that one of my Godbrothers, a *sannyasi*, he was deputed [in the 1930s] to go to London for starting a temple, but three or four years he remained there, he could not execute the will [of his spiritual master]; therefore he was called back. Now, I sent [three] married couples. All of them are present here. And they worked so nicely that within one year we started our London temple, and that is going on very nicely. [applause] So it is not the question of a *brahmacari*, *sannyasi* or *grhastha*..... One who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa and preaches all over the world, he is guru, spiritual master. It doesn’t matter. So in Europe and America I am especially creating more *grhasthas*, families, so that they can take up this movement very seriously and preach, and I am glad to inform you that this process has become very successful. Thank you very much. [applause]

Then, when I joined ISKCON it was assumed that everyone would become married, and indeed, devotees were urged to do so. Marriages were arranged, usually without courtship, and each had to be approved by Srila Prabhupada. But as early as 1971 Srila Prabhupada was becoming concerned, as shown by this letter of July 5th to Hridayananda, one of his leaders:

So far as R getting himself married, you must first discuss with him that this marriage business is not a farce, but it must be taken very seriously. There is no question of divorce, and if he will promise not to separate from his wife, then my sanction for the marriage is there; otherwise not. Recently too

many couples have been drifting into Maya's waters, and it is very discouraging. So if he will agree on these points, then you can perform the marriage with my blessings.

Srila Prabhupada's discouragement with the outcome of marriages continued to increase. Finally, in 1974, Srila Prabhupada simply refused to sanction any further marriages. (In my temple, there were no marriages between devotees for nearly a year, and then they were performed under my local sanction with a civil ceremony.) Srila Prabhupada's policy seemed to change as a result of his discouragement. Throughout ISKCON, householder life began to undergo a radical devaluation. Scriptural statements condemning married life as "a dark well" and so on became prominently quoted. Male devotees were strongly urged to remain *brahmacari* (celibate), which now seemed to be the norm, and *sannyasa* was a kind of reward for achievement. The number of men initiated into the *sannyasa asrama* increased dramatically. A genuine desire for transcendence, often co-mingled with an urge to acquire prestige, position, and power within the institution, had propelled most of these young men into rash and improvident heroics. The persistence of desires they could neither acknowledge nor control started to manifest as intolerance and fanaticism. The social climate began to turn ugly: Some of these *sannyasis* embarked on preaching campaigns against householders and even more so against women, whose life in the movement at this time became extremely trying. Feelings grew so heated that in 1976, a clash between householder temple presidents in North America and a powerful association of peripatetic *sannyasis* and *brahmacaris* escalated into a conflict so major that Srila Prabhupada called it a "fratricidal war."

As one would expect, over the long run many of these young *sannyasis* found it impossible to maintain their vows. There was a steady, even growing, exodus. In most cases, an extreme sense of disgrace and shame, amplified by the merciless condemnation of the *sannyasi* community itself, propelled them into exile into the fringe or beyond.

Although the problems of *grhasthas* and *sannyasis* became well known by the agency of scandalized gossip, the devotees in the movement could not bring themselves collectively to acknowledge the scope of the difficulty and its significance. This was more or less the state of affairs when Srila Prabhupada passed away in November of 1977, at the age of eighty two, and ISKCON was transferred to the hands of his students, none of whom had had more than a dozen years training. Eleven select members of the GBC were elevated to the position of initiating guru. (The two householders among them were quickly persuaded to take *sannyasa*.) However, the empowerment of the next generation did nothing to abrogate the trend of *sannyasis*' falling down, a trend that did not spare the group of new gurus. Some were soon in trouble. Within ten years of assuming the role of living exemplars and via media to God for thousands of new devotees, six of them had quite spectacularly plummeted, and ISKCON's survival was in doubt.

"Guru Reform"

The crisis of authority that shook ISKCON to its foundations in the years after Srila Prabhupada's demise—and led finally in 1987 to a restructuring of the position of guru in ISKCON—was not

exclusively due to the spiritual and material immaturity of the leaders, although that was serious enough in itself. Those shortcomings were linked, both as cause and effect, to a profound structural problem in ISKCON. This problem concerned the way in which the position of initiating guru had become institutionalized in ISKCON after Prabhupada. The problem arose when the conception of guru was implicitly based on a traditional model of an inspired, charismatic spiritual autocrat, an absolute and autonomously decisive authority, around whom an institution takes shape as the natural extension and embodiment of his charisma. Indeed, Srila Prabhupada himself was such a guru. Yet starting in 1970, Srila Prabhupada had worked diligently to establish a quite different sort of leadership structure in ISKCON, a structure he repeatedly emphasized that would continue after him. This is a model of management found in distinctly modern institutions, that of a corporate board of directors, called in ISKCON “the Governing Body Commission.” The practical problem facing ISKCON after Srila Prabhupada’s demise was this: How do gurus, who are God’s direct representatives and according to fundamental Vaisnava theology to be worshipped by their disciples “on a equal level with God,” fit within an organization functioning through modern rational and legal modes under the direction of a committee? This is the institutional and philosophical dilemma that ISKCON faced. Although ISKCON’s crisis of leadership and authority was precipitated by the falldowns and deviations of some of the gurus, that crisis was to a large extent resolved by a structural revisioning and reordering of the institutionalization of gurus in the society.

On May 28, 1977, during what turned out to be Srila Prabhupada’s terminal illness, the Governing Body Commission deputed a committee of seven members to question their spiritual master about the delicate matter of guru succession: How would the function of initiating guru be carried out in ISKCON after Srila Prabhupada’s departure? In response to this question, Srila Prabhupada said he would select some disciples to begin immediately performing all of the activities involved in giving initiation—approving the candidate, chanting on the beads, giving the name, and so on—acting as an officiating priest (rtvik) on Srila Prabhupada’s behalf. Those so initiated during Srila Prabhupada’s physical presence would be Srila Prabhupada’s disciples. After his demise, however, those same officiating gurus to be selected by Srila Prabhupada would, if qualified, become gurus in their own right. Those whom they initiated would be their own disciples, and Srila Prabhupada would be their grand-spiritual master.

In July, Srila Prabhupada selected eleven members of the GBC (then twenty in number) to begin acting at once as officiating gurus. Thus the GBC understood Srila Prabhupada to have chosen the first initiating gurus to succeed him.

After Srila Prabhupada’s demise in November, 1977, those eleven members quickly became elevated in an extraordinary way above all other devotees in the movement, even their colleagues on the GBC. Within the GBC, the gurus formed a special sub-committee, which had jurisdiction on all matters concerning gurus and initiation, including the exclusive power to appoint any new gurus and to deal with any problems concerning gurus.

The new gurus received the same ceremonial treatment that was accorded Srila Prabhupada. In every ISKCON temple room, there was reserved for Srila Prabhupada an elevated ceremonial seat, called a *vyasasana*, that represented the spiritual authority of its occupier. After Prabhupada's demise, most temples installed a life-size statue of Prabhupada on the *vyasasana*. During the daily morning order of service, Srila Prabhupada was honored at that *vyasasana* with a ceremony called *guru-puja*, during which the devotees would gather at the *vyasasana* and sing a traditional hymn in praise of guru while a priest would perform the formal arati ceremony of worship. In addition, after Srila Prabhupada's demise, new, lower *vyasanas* were installed next to Srila Prabhupada's, and there the new gurus daily received *puja* at the same time that Srila Prabhupada was offered his.

Each of the new gurus was allocated his own geographical area to initiate in and preside over. Srila Prabhupada had organized the GBC so that each member was responsible for the movement's activities in a particular geographical area, or "zone." With the advent of new gurus, those 20 or so GBC zones became part of eleven greater zones, each of which had one of the eleven initiating gurus as its head. That guru's zone would consist of the zone he managed as a GBC member, and then in most cases the zone or zones of other GBC members who were not initiating gurus. To all new recruits, the local zonal *acarya* was presented as the spiritual master. Although in principle a new devotee was free to choose his initiating guru out of the eleven, formidable social and institutional pressures directed his choice to one place only. Typically, a new devotee strongly attracted to taking initiation from another guru would be relocated to that guru's zone.

In point of fact, in each ISKCON temple room two—not one—*vyasanas* were established for new gurus. The two smaller *vyasanas* flanked Srila Prabhupada's. The one on Srila Prabhupada's right was consecrated to the exclusive use of the local zonal *acarya*. The one on the left, referred to as the "guest *vyasana*," was occupied by any of the initiating gurus from outside the zone who might happen to be visiting.

The zonal *acarya* naturally exercised great de facto power, and the relation between the guru and the GBC (both individually and collectively) soon became a difficult and troubling issue. It seemed to many that Srila Prabhupada had established two authority structures—that of the GBC and that of the gurus. Indeed, the gurus, with their status as sacred persons, a status constantly emphasized by formal deference and ceremonial honors, and their growing numbers of personally devoted followers, quickly eclipsed the GBC. Many of the gurus felt that the GBC was a temporary, ad hoc expedient until the movement could be unified under the charismatic leadership of a single, "self-effulgent *acarya*," who would emerge among the gurus in the course of time, in the way that an emperor would gradually be recognized among a group of kings. Further, many gurus tended to feel that the essential characteristic of a guru as an absolute authority (being the representative of God on earth) was vitiated by the give-and-take of collegial relations among the GBC. Indeed, in response to the question about such a compromise of the guru's position, it was at one point officially stated that for the sake of the movement's unity and harmony the gurus voluntarily set aside the natural exercise of their absolute position and accepted the relativity of working with the GBC.

Yet it is interesting that the true position of the guru in ISKCON was most honestly proclaimed to the devotees in symbolic terms, in the language of furniture, as it were, rather than in explicit verbal utterance. I have already mentioned that two *vyasasanas*, or ceremonial seats, were provided in each temple for the gurus coming after Srila Prabhupada. This system of twin *vyasasanas* was established without any explicit articulation of its meaning to the devotees in ISKCON. Indeed, I am convinced that even those who established the system had not fully articulated its meaning even to themselves; for what ever reason, they were not all fully conscious of what they were doing, but were acting more on instinct or intuition. Why could there not have been only one additional *vyasasana* upon which any new guru could sit? Why two? This question was not asked until the reform movement raised it in 1985. In fact the exclusive *vyasasana*, reserved for the sole use of the *acarya* of that zone, symbolized the seat of that guru as the head of the institution. The exclusive *vyasasana* indicated the traditional absolute and autocratic guru of Hindu tradition. And it is that particular conception of the role of guru which was indeed essentially in conflict with the GBC system of management as set up by Srila Prabhupada.

The Sanskrit word *acarya* was commonly used in ISKCON as a designation, as a title, for the initiating gurus, but the word has several meanings, and this ambiguity became the source of much difficulty. The most basic meaning is “one who teaches by example.” It is synonymous with guru. However, *acarya* tends to convey a more honorific sense. The outstanding teachers and leaders are called *acaryas*, and the word is encountered as a title, and incorporated into the names of teachers who were founders of institutions or communities: Sankar*acarya*, Madhvacarya, Ramanujacarya, and the like. Finally, *acarya* is specifically used to denote a guru or teacher who resides at the head of the institution.

The *acarya* in this last sense denotes a prominent and traditional form of religious leadership in India: in which a single, charismatic individual attracts others to him and by a natural process an institution forms about him. In this typically premodern style of leadership, the organization is very much a personal extension, a veritable embodiment, of that charismatic individual. (Srila Prabhupada is often quoted as having said that ISKCON was “his body.”) The viability and spiritual credibility of the institution is largely a function of the perceived spiritual potency of the *acarya*. In India, the current *acarya* would appoint his successor from among his followers, and in this way the charisma would be transferred. Upon the demise of his predecessor, the successor *acarya* would take the seat at the head of the institute. That successor *acarya* would be ritually elevated over all other disciples of his guru (his “god-brothers”), and all of them would bring new members to him for initiation.

ISKCON, however, represents a departure from this archaic form of organization. Srila Prabhupada repeatedly stressed his intention that ISKCON would not, after his departure, be managed by a single *acarya*, but rather by the board of directors, the Governing Body Commission, that he formed and began to train in 1970. Srila Prabhupada’s intention, and his departure from the tradition of the institutional *acarya*, is shown in a striking way in his will. Traditionally, it was in the first article of his will that an *acarya* named his successor, passing on his institution to his heir as if it

were his personal property. The first article of Srila Prabhupada's will reads: "The Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority for the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness."

(To speakers of American English, "Governing Body Commission" has a distinctly British ring, revealing at once the colonial provenance of the phrase. Indeed, "Governing Body Commission" turns out to be the title of the board of directors of that great British contribution to India of modern efficiency and management, the Indian Railways.)

With its corporate form of organization, ISKCON thus represents a modernization of a religious tradition. That modernization is the culmination of several generations of effort and it was not easily accomplished. Bhaktivinoda Thakura (1838-1914) was the first *acarya* in the tradition to receive a western-style education and to write in English. A visionary, he saw a reformed and revitalized Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition operating as a unified world-wide preaching mission in the modern world. He instilled this vision in his son, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura (1874-1937), who was to become Srila Prabhupada's guru. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati had constructed a preaching mission of over sixty centers throughout India called the Gaudiya Matha. He tried to push beyond the boundary of India by sending a missionary *sannyasi* in the 1930s to Europe (but without much success). The Gaudiya Matha was a large, vital, and growing concern, yet soon after the demise of its founder, the organization fragmented. Srila Prabhupada explains how this happened:

Such disagreement among the disciples of one *acarya* is also found among the members of the Gaudiya Matha. In the beginning, during the presence of Om Visnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacarya Astottara-sata Śrī Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada, all the disciples worked in agreement; but just after his disappearance, they disagreed. One party strictly followed the instructions of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, but another group created their own concoction about executing his desires. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, at the time of his departure, requested all his disciples to form a governing body and conduct missionary activities cooperatively. He did not instruct a particular man to become the next *acarya*. But just after his passing away, his leading secretaries made plans, without authority, to occupy the post of *acarya*, and they split in two factions over who the next *acarya* would be. Consequently, both factions were *asara*, or useless, because they had no authority, having disobeyed the order of the spiritual master. Despite the spiritual master's order to form a governing body and execute the missionary activities of the Gaudiya Matha, the two unauthorized factions began litigation that is still going on after forty years with no decision. (*Caitanya-caritamrita*, *Adi-lila*, 12.8, purport)

Other accounts, from Gaudiya Matha sources, say that a Governing Body Commission was formed and operated for a while before the attempt to establish an *acarya* at the head of the institution shattered the organization. In any case, it is clear that the previous generation came to grief on the same issue that confronted ISKCON: of forming a unified preaching mission that did not depend on the direction of any one individual but rather on a collegial body, functioning cooperatively. Indeed, the *acarya* first established over the main body of the Gaudiya Matha suffered the same fate as that which befell a number of the ISKCON *acaryas*: after being raised so high, he fell down from the

principles of Krishna consciousness. From Srila Prabhupada's perspective, all these spiritual problems must be considered as the consequence of the disciples' disobedience of the order of the spiritual master.

Because the Gaudiya Matha had failed, Srila Prabhupada had to work independently, establishing his own society and becoming its sole *acarya*. Had things gone better, he would have been one of many missionaries and preachers within a unified Gaudiya mission. In other words, Srila Prabhupada's position as the autonomous guru at the head of ISKCON, was, from his point of view, a second-best arrangement, the consequence of failure.

Learning from that failure, Srila Prabhupada set up a governing body and watched over its operations as it tried to manage the society. He taught the GBC how to function. For example, in 1975 he took the body through its first regular annual meeting, showing how the GBC should strictly follow parliamentary procedure (as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order), how proposals should be put forward, discussed, voted upon (Srila Prabhupada himself voted on each item, acting as one among many), and those that passed entered into a minutes book. As time went on he tried to turn as much management over to the GBC as possible, intervening only when there were crises. He made sure the whole movement understood that the GBC was being trained to continue at the head of the society after he was gone.

The GBC did carry on, and no one had tried to establish a single *acarya* over ISKCON. Yet the division of ISKCON into private initiating zones, the installation of the exclusive *vyasasana*, the ritual elevation of the gurus far above their own god-brothers, had implicitly established eleven *acaryas* of the traditional institutional type, each bearing the same relationship to his zone as Srila Prabhupada had borne to the entire movement.

The manner in which the first eleven were selected as gurus became interpreted in accordance with the paradigm of the *acarya's* appointment of a successor to the head of his institution. For example, in a book of homages to one of the new gurus, published in 1979, we read this: "Desiring to prepare his disciples for his departure, His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada very wisely selected eleven of his most intimate disciples to become both his material and spiritual successors."

At the same time, a growing number of Srila Prabhupada's disciples felt there was something wrong with the position of new gurus in ISKCON. Many felt their god-brothers—or most of them, anyway—were simply unqualified for such a position. Yet when several *acaryas* began to engage in questionable or even scandalous behavior, it was only with some difficulty that the GBC established its right to exercise any authority over gurus, who were seen, after all, as Srila Prabhupada's hand-picked successors. Even after the GBC established its authority, its control in most cases remained more de jure than de facto.

After two gurus, Hamsadutta and Jayatirtha, were expelled from ISKCON, many Prabhupada disciples were in constant anxiety, fearing it was only a matter of time before some one or other of the remaining *acaryas* fell down or deviated. A group centered in California began circulating papers around the movement arguing that none of Srila Prabhupada's disciples was fit to be an *acarya*.

These dissidents refused to believe that Srila Prabhupada could have hand-picked to be gurus any of these (to them) obviously unqualified people, and they argued that the archival tape recording of the May 28, 1977 conversation had been doctored by the gurus. This group proposed that no one should be initiated in ISKCON until the “self-effulgent *acarya*” would emerge. The idea of putting all initiations on indefinite hold did not appeal to most devotees, however, and this group eventually dissolved. Yet the notion that ISKCON needed a “self-effulgent *acarya*” to lead it adequately became the shared presupposition of what I would describe as the extreme right and the extreme left. The extreme right constituted those partisans who fervently believed that some one or the other of the current zonal *acaryas*, say Kirtanananda or Jayatirtha or Bhagavan, was indeed the awaited “self-effulgent *acarya*,” lacking only full recognition to take his place at the head of all ISKCON as Srila Prabhupada’s legitimate successor, a recognition unfortunately thwarted by “ambitious and envious god-brothers.” The extreme left was composed of those who held that none of Srila Prabhupada’s disciples is qualified to be an *acarya*, and until such a qualified *acarya* emerges and is spontaneously recognized by everyone (“self-effulgent”) no one should claim to be a guru in his own right.

In the fall of 1984 a routine meeting of the temple presidents of North America turned into a collective and public acknowledgment that nearly everyone held deep private misgivings about the manner in which the position of guru had been established in ISKCON. They organized an immediate second meeting to further consider the issue, and thus the “guru reform movement” was born. With the engagement of a significant number of second-tier leaders, men whose loyalty to ISKCON was not in doubt, a credible and potent movement was established. The temple presidents in North America, almost to a man, deeply believed something was drastically wrong, yet there was no clear idea of exactly what it was. At the second meeting, I was assigned the task of preparing a research paper which would precisely locate what had gone wrong in the establishment of the gurus. In my research, I happened upon a 1978 letter written to a GBC member by Pradyumna dasa, a scholarly devotee who had been Srila Prabhupada’s assistant in his translation work and who was familiar with Vaishnava traditions; the letter spelled out objections to the newly established guru system. That letter provided the clue as to the precise problem. Building on Pradyumna’s insight, I was able to present a paper that combined analysis and polemics to argue that in violation of the desires of Srila Prabhupada, the traditional post of the “institutional *acarya*” had been established in ISKCON and that this *acarya* system was essentially in conflict with the GBC system so carefully established by Srila Prabhupada. This paper received the endorsement of the North American temple presidents.

By this time, the “reform moment” had broadened among Prabhupada’s disciples, far beyond the core group of the temple presidents. To many in that movement, the really vital issue was not one of structure but of the spiritual qualifications, or rather the perceived lack of them, in the present gurus. As a leader of the reform movement, however, I tried to focus our political effort on rectifying the structural problem.

I was not blind to the spiritual shortcomings of some of the gurus. I even recognized that the structural problem was in part an institutionalization of a serious spiritual defect—that is, unacknowledged personal ambition in some of ISKCON’s leaders. However, it was clear to me that the gurus held no monopoly on spiritual deficiency. I was not sure that the reform movement was that much purer—as many of the attacks on the gurus were weighted by a generous load of envy, vengefulness, and resentment. In my view, what had gone wrong in ISKCON constituted a collective judgment on all of Srila Prabhupada’s disciples. After all, it is Vaishnava doctrine that one advances by the grace of guru, and the guru’s grace is equally available to all his disciples. Those who became gurus were among Srila Prabhupada’s “best men.” If they were not good enough, each critic like me had to ask himself: “Why wasn’t I any better?” Thus the first part of “guru reform” had to be personal reformation, a renewed dedication to the cultivation of spiritual life by all Srila Prabhupada’s disciples, reformers most of all. It would not do to try to purify ISKCON without purifying oneself.

Among those who focused on the lack of qualified people to be gurus, some thought the solution was to devise a way to continue the movement and yet eliminate the position of guru as far as possible. Initiations would continue, but the guru would be considered some sort of apprentice or merely a formal ecclesiastical functionary. To my mind, these people were proposing an essential change in the tradition, not merely an adaptation to new circumstances. Typically, this group also awaited the coming of the “self-effulgent *acarya*” to lead ISKCON, which, in the interregnum, would make do with semi- or demi-gurus. Captivated by the image of the *acarya* as an absolute and decisive authority, whose judgments were indubitably correct, and needing such a person for their own spiritual security, the give-and-take of a collegial body did not appeal to them any more than it appealed to most of the gurus they ostensibly opposed.

It was my conviction that we could retain in ISKCON the full-fledged position of guru, as delineated by the Scriptures, a position that did not essentially involve being the autonomous autocratic head of an institution, did not essentially disallow discussion, consultation, revision and adjustment, and did not forbid collegial decision-making as a kind of lese majesté.

The zonal *acarya* position had asserted it was intrinsic to the position of guru to be absolute, and it professed that the gurus would voluntarily sacrifice that position for the sake of the movement. This implied that by working with a GBC the gurus were doing something unnatural or artificial, and of course their “voluntary sacrifice” seemed increasingly pro forma. To counter this conception of the guru, I argued that there was a significant way in which it was essential for the bona-fide guru to be relative. After all, Vaishnava doctrine holds that the essential qualifying characteristic of a guru is that he strictly follows the order of his guru. He never becomes the master, but always remains the servant. Consequently, to be qualified to be a guru in ISKCON it was essential to strictly follow the order of Srila Prabhupada, who had decreed that all of us must serve cooperatively under the authority of the GBC. Accepting the authority of the GBC board was not a voluntary option. Because it was Srila Prabhupada’s order, it was necessary to *guru*-hood itself.

The first effort of the “guru reform movement” was to urge a strengthening commitment to spiritual purification on everyone’s part. The second effort was to persuade the GBC to dismantle the “zonal *acarya* system” efficiently and decisively. We were able to put forward two proposals to the GBC, which, taken together, would dismantle the system. The first was to make the process of receiving authorization to initiate radically more open. Initially, the “initiating *acarya* standing committee” had the power to appoint new gurus; in 1982, it was changed to a three-fourths vote of the GBC. Up until 1986, only some half-dozen new gurus had been added (and a couple removed). From my perspective, the central intent of this proposal was to eliminate a de facto “property requirement” for becoming an initiating guru. Since a guru had to have his exclusive initiating zone, one or more of the established gurus had to lose territory to create a zone for any new gurus. Such a major change, sometimes entailing the migration of large numbers of disciples, required negotiations at the highest level. And many gurus were reluctant to shrink the area of their authority. The paradigm of the institutional *acarya* envisioned a zone unified and made coherent by a common devotion and submission to a single person. The guru zones became more unified than ISKCON as a whole, which was becoming increasingly fragmented, turning into a kind of amphictyony of independently empowered leaders. The paradigm of the reform movement, in contrast, envisioned ISKCON temples in which the disciples of many different gurus could all work together for their common cause. The unifying personality was to be the founder-*acarya* of the institution, Srila Prabhupada, the master of all subsequent gurus and disciples. This could be achieved only by eliminating the implicit property requirement for being a guru, something that would happen if the authorizing process were opened up and the number of gurus increased.

The second proposal was simply that there should be only one other *vyasasana* than Srila Prabhupada’s in ISKCON temples, and any of the initiating gurus could sit on it. This proposal abolished the exclusive *vyasasana*, the symbol of the zonal *acarya*’s sovereignty. It is characteristic of religions that symbols and that which they symbolize are tightly unified; they could be said to interpenetrate. I realized therefore that if the symbol of the system were eliminated, it would go far to eliminate the system. The destruction of the symbol was a necessary if not a sufficient condition for the destruction of the reality. The proposal also dealt with a difficulty within the reform movement: there was little agreement on what to do about the rituals involving the gurus, and a particularly militant segment wanted badly to remove all symbols of spiritual authority from them. The proposal simply to remove the exclusive *vyasasana* received a consensus and satisfied the need to rectify the rituals, but it left the further issue of *guru*-ritual until later. It was surgically precise. It would do the job.

Eventually, both these proposals were put into effect by the GBC. There are now fifty-odd initiating gurus in ISKCON, all of them serving under GBC direction and fully accountable to the GBC. ISKCON regulations go out of their way to assure that new members are able to freely decide who their guru will be, and most temples have a diverse mix of disciples of different gurus working

together. I believe we now have a movement organized the way Srila Prabhupada wanted it. That by itself does not guarantee purity of the members, but it is a necessary condition for it.

It has taken time for confidence in ISKCON to be restored. The reform movement was consolidated in 1987, when four more fallen or deviated gurus were removed and fifteen new members were elected to the GBC, among them leaders of the reform movement. For a number of devotees, the loss of faith in ISKCON leadership, the spectacular fall of six gurus, called into question their faith in Srila Prabhupada, although such a doubt was usually unacknowledged and unarticulated. They could not believe Srila Prabhupada had intended the original eleven to be gurus, and the “appointment tape” continued to be reinterpreted. The left-wing challenge to gurus has undergone two further incarnations, resting on conspiracy theories, stories of suppressed instructions of Srila Prabhupada, whom they claim wanted the “officiating guru” system to continue after his demise, so that Prabhupada, (contrary to all Vaishnava teaching), would continue to initiate disciples posthumously. These stories have been crafted to get Prabhupada “off the hook.”

There is a failure to appreciate the problem Srila Prabhupada faced in his last days. We can be sure that he knew his own disciples better than they knew themselves; he had no illusions about their spiritual qualification. Yet they were pressing for a selection of successor gurus, the ultimate position to the ambitious. Hamsadutta and Kirtanananda had already been rebuked by Srila Prabhupada for receiving *guru-puja* “in the presence of the spiritual master,” a serious transgression. Without any indication from Srila Prabhupada in this manner, there would likely have been chaos. Yet Srila Prabhupada clearly did not want to give his sanction to unfit people, a spiritual error. So he selected them without endorsing them. In response to the question of initiation after his departure, Srila Prabhupada gave a list of “officiating gurus,” designating them in an indirect or oblique manner. He expected them to become “regular gurus” in the future, but there was no “hand-picking of successors,” no laying on of hands or anointing with oil, no transfer of power to some special and exclusive group. He also knew that some, like Kirtanananda, would initiate with or without his sanction, so he named them. If not there would likely have been a schism in 1978 instead of 1987. To me, Srila Prabhupada’s solution was brilliant, the best that could have been done under the circumstances. The result would depend upon Krishna.

I have come to recognize that what ISKCON had to achieve, through much conflict and suffering, was no easy thing. The problem is to take an ancient religious tradition, long isolated from the impact of modernity, and retrofit it for the modern world while at the same time transplanting it from its native soil into multiple outside cultures and civilizations—all without vitiating or distorting its essential practices and doctrines. The process has been the endeavor of two generations, and it is far from complete.

I joined ISKCON for spiritual life and not anything else. At the time, I did not know what would become of that part of myself that was an academically trained scholar of religion. But Krishna has both used and instructed that part, giving me a ring-side seat to a fascinating instance of dynamic

religious growth and change. My life in ISKCON has had unsurpassably wonderful times and times of abysmal torment and dread, but in any case not one day has failed to be consummately interesting.

Our work of reform and renewal continues. It has to be perpetual. As part of that work, ISKCON is beginning to look back at itself, engaging in its own process of honestly coming to terms with its past. Only by so doing can it have a viable and progressive future.

Appendix 8 — On God and Science (*Sadapūta Dāsa*)

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IN A RECENT book review in *Scientific American*, Harvard evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould points out that many scientists see no contradiction between traditional religious beliefs and the world view of modern science. Noting that many evolutionists have been devout Christians, he concludes, “Either half my colleagues are enormously stupid, or else the science of Darwinism is fully compatible with conventional religious beliefs—and equally compatible with atheism, thus proving that the two great realms of nature’s factuality and the source of human morality do not strongly overlap.”[1] The question of whether or not science and religion are compatible frequently comes up, and Gould himself points out that he is dealing with it for the “umpteenth millionth time.” It is a question to which people are prone to give muddled answers. Definitions of God and God’s modes of action in the world seem highly elastic, and the desire to combine scientific theories with religious doctrines has impelled many sophisticated people to stretch both to the limit. In the end, something has to give. To help us locate the snapping point, let’s look at what a few scientists have said about God.

Dr. John A. O’Keefe, a NASA astronomer and a practicing Catholic, has said, “Among biologists, the feeling has been since Darwin that all of the intricate craftsmanship of life is an accident, which arose because of the operations of natural selection on the chemicals of the earth’s shell. This is quite true....”[2]

O’Keefe accepts that life developed on earth entirely through physical processes of the kind envisioned by Darwin. He stresses, however, that many features of the laws of physics have just the right values to allow for life as we know it. He concludes from this that God created the universe for man to live in—more precisely, God did this at the moment of the Big Bang, when the universe and its physical laws sprang out of nothing.

To support this idea, O’Keefe quotes Pope Pius XII, who said in his address to the Pontifical Academy of Science in 1951:

In fact, it would seem that present-day science, with one sweeping step back across millions of centuries, has succeeded in bearing witness to the primordial *Fiat lux* [“Let there be light”] uttered at the moment when, along with matter, there burst forth from nothing a sea of light and radiation, while the particles of chemical elements split and formed into millions of galaxies.[3]

Now this might seem a reasonable union of religion and science. God creates the universe in a brief moment; then everything runs according to accepted scientific principles. Of the universe's fifteen-billion-year history, the first tiny fraction of a second is to be kept aside as sacred ground, roped off from scientific scrutiny. Will scientists agree not to trespass on this sacred territory?

Certainly not. Stephen Hawking, holder of Issac Newton's chair at Cambridge University, once attended a conference on cosmology organized by Jesuits in the Vatican. The conference ended with an audience with the Pope. Hawking recalls:

He told us that it was all right to study the evolution of the universe after the big bang, but we should not inquire into the big bang itself because that was the moment of creation and therefore the work of God. I was glad then that he did not know the subject of the talk I had just given at the conference—the possibility that space-time was finite but had no boundary, which means that it had no beginning, no moment of creation.[4]

Whether or not Hawking's theory wins acceptance, this episode shows that science cannot allow any aspect of objective reality to lie outside its domain. We can get further insight into this by considering the views of Owen Gingerich of the Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. In a lecture on modern cosmogony and Biblical creation, Gingerich also interpreted the Big Bang as God's act of creation. He went on to say that we are created in the image of God and that within us lies a "divine creative spark, a touch of the infinite consciousness, and conscience." [5]

What is this "divine spark"? Gingerich's words suggest that it is spiritual and gives rise to objectively observable behavior involving conscience. But mainstream science rejects the idea of a nonphysical conscious entity that influences matter. Could "divine spark" be just another name for the brain, with its behavioral programming wired in by genetic and cultural evolution? If this is what Gingerich meant, he certainly chose misleading words to express it.

Freeman Dyson of Princeton's Institute for Advanced Studies arrived at ideas similar to those of Gingerich, but from a non-Christian perspective.

I do not claim that the architecture of the universe proves the existence of God. I claim only that the architecture of the universe is consistent with the hypothesis that mind plays an essential role in its functioning....Some of us may be willing to entertain the hypothesis that there exists a universal mind or world soul which underlies the manifestations of mind that we observe.... The existence of a world soul is a question that belongs to religion and not to science.[6]

Dyson fully accepts Darwin's theory of chance variation and natural selection. But he also explicitly grants mind an active role in the universe: "Our consciousness is not just a passive epiphenomenon carried along by chemical events in our brains, but an active agent forcing the molecular complexes to make choices between one quantum state and another." [7] He also feels that the universe may, in a sense, have known we were coming and made preparations for our arrival.[8] Dyson is verging on scientific heresy, and he cannot escape from this charge simply by saying he is talking about religion and not science. Quantum mechanics ties together chance and the conscious observer. Dyson uses this as a loophole through which to introduce mind into the phenomena of

nature. But if random quantum events follow quantum statistics as calculated by the laws of physics, then mind has no choice but to go along with the flow as a passive epiphenomenon. And if mind can make quantum events follow different statistics, then mind violates the laws of physics. Such violations are rejected not only by physicists but also by evolutionists, who definitely do not envision mind-generated happenings playing any significant role in the origin of species.

It would seem that O'Keefe, Gingerich, and Dyson are advancing religious ideas that are scientifically unacceptable. Unacceptable because they propose an extra-scientific story for events that fall in the chosen domain of science: the domain of all real phenomena.

To see what is scientifically acceptable, let us return to the remarks of Stephen Jay Gould. In his review in *Scientific American*, Gould says, "Science treats factual reality, while religion struggles with human morality." [9] We can compare this to a statement by the eminent theologian Rudolph Bultmann: "The idea of God is imperative, not indicative; ethical and not factual." [10]

The point Gould and Bultmann make is that God has nothing to do with facts in the real world. God is involved not with what is but what ought to be, not with the phenomena of the world but people's ethical and moral values.

Of course, a spoken or written statement of what ought to be is part of what is. So if God is out of what is, He cannot be the source of statements about what ought to be. These must simply be human statements, and so must all statements about God. As it's put by Don Cupitt, Cambridge philosopher of religion, "There is no longer anything out there for faith to correspond to, so the only test of faith now is the way it works out in life. The objects of faith, such as God, are seen as guiding spiritual ideals we live by, and not as beings." [11]

This may sound like atheism, and so it is. But we shouldn't stop here. Human religious activity is part of the factual world, and so it also lies within the domain of science. While religious people "struggle with morality," inquisitive scientists struggle to explain man's religious behavior --unique in the animal kingdom-- in terms of the Darwinian theory of evolution. This was foreshadowed by a remark made by Darwin himself in his early notes: "Love of the deity effect of organization, oh you materialist!" [12] Religious ideas, including love of God, must arise from the structure and conditioning of the brain, and these in turn must arise through genetic and cultural evolution. Darwin himself never tried to develop these ideas extensively, but in recent years sociobiologists such as Edward O. Wilson have. [13]

So is the science of Darwinism fully compatible with conventional religious beliefs? That depends on one's conventions. If by God you mean a real spiritual being who controls natural phenomena, even to a slight degree, then Darwinism utterly rejects your idea—not because science empirically disproves it, but because the idea goes against the fundamental scientific program of explaining all phenomena through the laws of physics. Religious beliefs are compatible with Darwinism only if they hold that God is simply a human idea having something to do with moral imperatives. But if this is what you believe, then instead of having religious beliefs, you have "scientific" beliefs about religion.

Judging from the theistic ideas of O’Keefe, Gingerich, and Dyson, many far-from-stupid scientists do believe in God and Darwinism. But in their efforts to combine truly incompatible ideas, they succumb to enormously muddled thinking. And so they commit scientific heresy in spite of themselves. If one is at all interested in knowledge of God, one should recognize that such knowledge is not compatible with mainstream science, and in particular not with Darwinism.

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Appendix 9 — Questions (*Sitarāma dāsa*)

Questions

1. The world is a veritable spiritual supermarket and therefore choosing a spiritual path very difficult. What would be the easiest and most beneficial way of learning how to ‘shop’ for the proper path to true spirituality?
2. The way of religion is fraught with multiple speculations and often dangerous paths are presented by unqualified persons. How does one ascertain what is religion and what is ir-religion?
3. The Guru cult has reached ‘popstar’ proportions and the word master a common usage for all kind of fools. What is the most definitive quality of a master and how does the conditioned being learn to understand such a phenomena without training in spiritual essence?
4. Why are spiritualist against material enjoyment?
5. How do I become convinced or begin to understand that God is not the origin of tyranny? Most religions seem to strike a deep sense of fear into its adherents and this is not very attractive.
6. Frankly, why should I denounce the very real enjoyment I obtain from material existence for promises of a better life that I may or may not obtain especially since I’m not very much attracted to renunciation, sacrifice or austerity? If I accept my fate that for every action there is an equal reaction and prepared to pay the price, what need do I have of God?

7. God says ‘think of Me, worship Me, offer homage unto Me’ etc. How does one dispel the (mis)understanding among selfish people simply concerned with me, their self, that God’s Me is different from theirs and not some self centered egotism?
8. If I cannot relate to the Supreme cause of all causes, why am I dissuaded from worshipping the denizens of the Celestial domain? Does it not improve my chances of a better next life if I at least worship those in the ‘employ’ of the Supreme. Since they have knowledge beyond mine, why not travel there, obtain it and simply try again?
9. Among the humans the need for reciprocal love is intense and the pursuit of this most energetic. How, through this common need, can we fathom the true love that will really set us free?
10. If one is interested in the absolute nature of the souls eternality then spiritual life seems a very wonderful option, but in the absence of such an understanding or realisation, it sounds quite piffle. How can one become easily convinced of the supremacy of the spirit over matter i.e. the soul over the body? Both render results. One here and now and the other somewhere else, so, inevitably most people will go for the here and now.

Appendix 10 — Śrī Tattva-sandarbha

SRI TATTVA SANDARBHA SECTION NINE

TRANSLATION: To ascertain the meanings of the four topics hinted at in the previous verse--*visaya*, as Kṛṣṇa; *sambandha*, as *vacya-vacaka*; *abhidheya*, (a synonym for *vidheya*, or process) as service to Kṛṣṇa; and *prayojana*, as love of Godhead--the means of acquiring valid knowledge will be decided.

Human beings are bound to have four types of defects: They are subject to delusion, make mistakes, have a cheating propensity, and imperfect senses. Thus they are unable to understand the inconceivable spiritual reality, for their means of acquiring knowledge by direct perception, inference, and so forth prove inadequate.

SRI JIVA TOSANI COMMENTARY: Without knowing the purpose of a book it is difficult for the reader to take a keen interest in it, so in the previous *annucheda* Śrīla Jiva Gosvami outlines his subject and purpose in brief. Now, with the words *tadabhajanalaksana-vidheya*, he indicates that devotional service as explained in the scriptures is the process to achieve the goal, *prema bhakti*. But before one practices a process he must have correct knowledge about it. Thus the need arises for discerning the means of acquiring valid knowledge. Subsequently, this portion of *Tattva-sandarbha* deals with the vaiṣṇava epistemology. In other words, Jiva Gosvami first establishes the validity of the source of his knowledge before analyzing the four topics mentioned in the previous *annucheda*.

Knowledge is of two types--valid and invalid. Valid knowledge is called *prama* and the process of acquiring it is called *pramana*. *Pramana* also means proof, evidence, or authority.

Jiva Gosvami is interested in an infallible means of acquiring knowledge. Human beings use various means to acquire knowledge, but none of them are infallible. This is owing to the four inherent defects, found in all humans without exception: Every human being has the tendency to be deluded (*bhrama*), makes mistakes (*pramada*), has a cheating propensity (*vipralipsa*), and has imperfect senses (*karanapatava*). *Bhrama*, or delusion, is of two types. One type is to consider the body as the self. This delusion is inherited at birth, but its intensity varies depending upon the degree of attachment to one's body. Owing to this defect we mistake the temporary and misery-causing sense objects as permanent and pleasure-giving. The second kind of delusion is called *samsaya*, or doubt. It happens when our senses preceive what isn't present, such as a mirage or an hallucination. At that time we have a doubtful or wrong perception.

Pramada, the second of the four defects, means that inadvertently we make mistakes. If our mind is not cooperating with a particular knowledge acquiring sense—the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, or touch—we do not get the corresponding knowledge. For example, a person may sit through a lecture but miss portions of it on account of the flickering nature of his mind. By inadvertance he fails to get knowledge. This defect is so commonplace we say, “To err is human”.

The third defect is called *vipralipsa*. It means propensity to cheat. Material conditioning causes a person to consider himself the material body, which can never give happiness due to its temporary nature. Still, out of delusion he seeks happiness through sense gratification. When unable to get it to his complete satisfaction, he takes to cheating in an attempt to improve his chances. As a result, spouses cheat each other, friends cheat friends, politicians cheat the public, and so on. Even in spiritual life sometimes a so-called guru cheats his disciple or the insincere disciple tries to cheat his guru. This cheating propensity manifests at all levels of material existence. Lastly is the defect of *karanapatava*, imperfect senses. We have five knowledge acquiring senses—eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and sense of touch. These five senses work only in a limited range. The human eye for instance can see between infrared and ultraviolet wavelengths, but there are many other wavelengths that the eye cannot discern, like radio waves, x-rays, and so on. Even within the visible range our eyes cannot see clearly if the light is too bright or too dim, if the object is too far or too close. In this way, upon analysis each sense has some limitation. The conclusion is that whereas perfect knowledge about material objects free of these four defects is not always possible, perfect knowledge about the transcendental realm is altogether impossible. This premise is the cornerstone of Vedic epistemology. Naturally, acknowledging these four defects makes the quest for a reliable *pramana* more exacting, a greater challenge. In India's philosophical tradition ten *pramanas* or valid means of acquiring knowledge are recognized. Some philosophers accept certain combinations of these as valid and reject others. Each gives arguments to support his diverse conclusions. The ten traditional *pramanas* are:

1. *Arjya*: These are utterances of a sage or demigod. There are many exceptional sages, Kapila, Gautama, Patanjali, and others, who founded a school of philosophy. They naturally have differences

of opinion and therefore the *Mahabharata* (*Vana Parva* 313.117) says, *na asau rsi yasya matam na bhinnam*, “One is not considered a philosopher if his opinion is not different from others”. As they are great thinkers we consider their utterances, but for a common man it is impossible to determine who gives the valid conclusion.

2. *Upamana*, or comparison: Knowledge about an unknown object can be gained by comparing it to a familiar object. If we have seen a cow, for example, but have not seen a “gavaya” or a forest cow, and if someone tells us that a forest cow resembles a cow, by comparison we can recognize a forest cow.

3. *Arthapatti*, or presumption: Here we assume an unknown fact in order to account for a known fact that is otherwise inexplicable. For example, if fat Devadatta does not eat during the daytime, one can safely assume that he eats at night. Otherwise his stoutness without eating during the daytime remains unexplained, as Devadatta cannot get fat by fasting nor can he maintain his weight without eating.

4. *Abhava*, or non-existence: Non-perception of a qualified object by a qualified sense is called perception of the *abhava* or the non-existence of that object. For example, a book is a qualified object for the visual perception and the eyes are the qualified senses or means of perception. When one does not see a book on a table he experiences its non-existence. This is classified as a separate category of perception, because there is no actual contact between the object and the sense instrument. Thus what is perceived is the non-existence of the object.

5. *Sambhava*, or inclusion: This *pramana* is based on the experience that the higher quantity includes the lower quantity. A hundred dollars automatically includes ones, fives, tens, and so on. To infer this knowledge, gained by inclusion, is called *sambhava*.

6. *Aitihiya*, or tradition: This *pramana* applies when something is known by common belief or tradition but the original source of that knowledge is unknown. For instance, there is a popular belief that the Old Fort in New Delhi was built by the Pandavas. We have no written proof or scriptural authority to support this, but the belief has been passed down for generations to the present day by tradition.

7. *Cesta*, or gesture: To acquire knowledge through bodily gestures or symbols is called *cesta*. For instance, one makes a “V” sign with his fingers to indicate victory, or in Deity worship *mudras* are shown to the Deity to convey certain messages.

8. *Pratyakṣa*, or direct perception: What we directly perceive with our senses may be valid or invalid knowledge; however, only valid knowledge is to be considered as *pramāṇa*. Sense perception is the principal means of acquiring knowledge in this material world. Both theistic and atheistic philosophers generally accept *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* as one of the means to valid knowledge. Direct perception is of two types—external and internal. An external perception is when knowledge is acquired through our senses. An internal perception is when the knowledge is acquired by our mind. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.7) Lord Kṛṣṇa lists the mind as the sixth sense (*manah-sasthani-indriyaṇi*). Through the mind we perceive emotions such as pain, pleasure, love, hate, and so forth.

On account of the inherent four defects *pratyakṣa* is not always a reliable process of acquiring valid knowledge. It is limited only to the present time; it cannot extend into the past or future. According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, however, perfected devotees who achieve direct perception of the Lord, His abode, and His associates through their spiritual trance, all have purified senses and have transcended the four defects. Such persons are reliable sources of knowledge because of their purified sense perception. This is confirmed in the ninth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* where Lord Kṛṣṇa says that this knowledge leads to direct realization of transcendence by experience (*pratyakṣavagamam*). Likewise, in the sixth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord assures Arjuna that in the state of transcendental trance, *samādhi*, the devotee acquires pure knowledge through his purified intelligence and transcendental senses (*buddhi-grāhyam atindriyam vetti*). This is called *vaiduṣya pratyakṣa* and it is flawless.

9. *Anumāna*, or inference: This is when we acquire knowledge by deduction. Literally, *anumāna* means “knowing after,” because the knowledge is arrived at after putting together known bits of information to arrive at an unknown but apparently logical conclusion. Such inferred knowledge is based on the probable relation between what is known and what is deduced. That in turn is based on prior direct perception or prior verbal testimony. This means the deduced outcome is dependent on the evidence. This concomitant relation between the evidence and the deduced conclusion is called *vyapti*.

Inference is of two kinds, inference for one’s self and inference for others. An example of inference for one’s self is when a person may make out the concomitant relationship between smoke and fire and arrive at the universal generalization “Wherever there is smoke there is fire” after repeatedly experiencing it in the kitchen and elsewhere. Then if he sees smoke hanging over a mountain in the distance he may recall his prior experience, that wherever there is smoke there is invariably fire, and thus he concludes, “The mountain is on fire”.

Inference for others consists of a syllogistic formula that has five steps. After arriving at an inferred conclusion a person employs this method, with a view to enable others to arrive at the same inferred conclusion. A syllogism follows this format: 1. Proposition: The mountain has fire. 2. Reason: Because it has smoke. 3. Universal proposition: Wherever there is smoke there is fire. 4. Application: The mountain has smoke. 5. Conclusion: Therefore it is on fire.

Any error in perceiving the cause or any deviation in the universal generalization then the conclusion will be faulty. In the above example, if the observer mistakes clouds over the mountain for smoke or perceives the smoke just after rain has extinguished the fire, then his deduced conclusion will be wrong. Hence, *anumana*, like *pratyaksya*, is not a foolproof method of acquiring knowledge.

10. *Sabda*, or revealed knowledge: *Sabda* literally means sound, but as a *pramana* it refers to articulate sound, which has meaning and which is spoken or written by an *apta-purusa*, a trustworthy person, an authority. Ultimately, *sabda* applies to revealed knowledge about the transcendental reality that specifically comes through a trustworthy person who is free from the four defects. This kind of *sabda* is distinct from the *sabda* used in mundane transactions, called *pauruseya sabda*, which is not always trustworthy. For Srila Jiva Gosvami *sabda* is restricted to the revealed knowledge of the Vedas. This is called *apauruseya sabda*, revealed knowledge from a superhuman source. It originates from the Supreme Personality of Godhead and is received in disciplic succession from a bonafide guru. *Apauruseya sabda*, therefore, because it is free of the four defects is the perfect *pramana*.

At present people generally have an aversion for accepting the authority of *sabda pramana* concerning absolute knowledge because of skepticism about who is a trustworthy source. They say, “Question authority” and they champion knowledge gained by experience or direct sense perception. Yet we constantly rely on knowledge passed through sound in many spheres of life. We depend on knowledge revealed from parents, teachers, books, magazines, T.V., radio, and numerous experts for their knowledge. Hearing from authorities enhances our learning many times over. If it was dispensed with we would be unable to function in our complex modern society.

Those who consider experience superior to *sabda* forget that experience itself shows that we gain most of our knowledge by hearing, not by experience. Experience is a great teacher, but it is severely limited by the four defects and the time consumed in acquiring it. And ultimately, no amount of experience would give us access to the transcendent spiritual reality. Indeed, *pauruseya sabda*, despite its usefulness in the mundane sphere, is also not reliable for understanding transcendence. For that *apauruseya sabda pramana* is our only hope.

As a means of acquiring knowledge, *sabda* is not limited only to the present time. It extends into the past and future as well. It is the most powerful tool for conveying knowledge from one person to another, especially if separated by time or place, which is precisely the case in relation to the spiritual world. For all these reasons therefore, philosophers in virtually all of India’s traditions accept the revealed knowledge as the flawless means for acquiring transcendental knowledge.

To Srila Jiva Gosvami and all followers of India’s orthodox tradition *sabda pramana* means the Vedas. They alone deliver knowledge of reality beyond our sensual perception. As explained in the next section, the Vedas are not human creations. They are manifest from the Supreme Lord (*vedo narayana saksat*), who is free from any defect.

In *Sarva-samvadini*, while discussing the principle of *sabda pramana*, Srila Jiva Gosvami writes: *tathapi-bhrama-pramada-vipralipsa-karanapatava-dosarahitavacanatmakah sabda eva mulam pramanam. Anyesam prayah purusa- bhramadidosamayatayanyatha pratitidarsanena pramanam va tadabhaso veti purusairnirnetumasakyatvat tasya tadabhavat.*

“Although there are ten means of acquiring knowledge, *sabda* is the primary process because all other means are afflicted with the four human defects. In all other knowledge acquiring processes it is difficult for a common person to ascertain whether the knowledge gained is valid or invalid.”

Although different schools of philosophies accept varying combinations of the ten *pramanas*, Srila Jiva Gosvami, following in the footsteps of Madhvacarya, accepts only *pratyaksa* (direct perception), *anumana* (inference) and *sabda* (revealed knowledge) as valid means of acquiring knowledge. *Pratyaksa* and *anumana* serve as assistants to *sabda*. Whenever they may contradict *sabda*, preference is given to *sabda pramana*. Some of the scriptural references for these three *pramanas* are given below: *pratyaksam canumanan ca sastram ca vividhagmam trayam suviditam karyam dharmasuddhimabhipsiata.*

“A person inquisitive about religion should try to understand the process of direct perception, inference, and the various scriptures (*sabda*), as these three are the means of acquiring Vedic knowledge.” (M.S. 12.105) *pratyaksenanumanena nigamenatmasamvida adyantavadasajjnatva nissango vicarediha.* “Lord Kṛṣṇa said: With the help of direct perception, inference and revealed scripture know the objects which have a beginning and an end as temporary. Becoming free from attachment to them maintain yourself in this material world”. (S.B. 11.28.9)

In *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (11.19.17) Lord Kṛṣṇa includes *aitihya*, tradition, along with sense perception, inference and *sabda* as the means of acquiring knowledge, but it is usually accepted as part of *sabda*, though not necessarily *apauruseya sabda*.

By accepting only three of the ten *pramanas* Jiva Gosvami does not exclude the other seven. He says that *pratyaksa*, *anumana*, and *sabda* includes the other seven *pramanas*. The breakdown is as follows: *upamana*, *arthapatti*, *sambhava*, and *cesta* are included in *anumana*; *abhava* is in *pratyaksa*; *arsya* and *aitihya* in *sabda*.

In mathematical logic, Godel’s theorem proves the importance of *sabda pramana*. His theorem states that within any system some parameters always remain unexplained, so a system cannot be understood completely by the known parameters. Knowledge of certain parameters outside the system is required and the only means to this knowledge is by word, because all other means of knowledge lie within the system, the material world. Similarly, to understand transcendence we require knowledge outside our experience. The means to this knowledge is by transcendental word, or *sabda pramana*. Next, Srila Jiva Gosvami explains what process is suitable in deciding *visaya*, *sambandha*, and *prayojana* and why.

SECTION TEN SRI TATTVA SANDARBHA

TRANSLATION: For us who are inquisitive, therefore, about that which is beyond all, yet the support of everything, which is most inconceivable and wondrous in nature, direct perception, inference and so on are not suitable means. For this purpose we accept only the Vedas, whose words are transcendental, which is the source of all mundane and transcendental knowledge, and which have been passed down in humanity through unbroken chains of succession since time immemorial.

SRI JIVA TOSANI COMMENTARY

As already noted, direct perception and inference depend on sense perception, which is limited only to empirical objects and which is subject to the four human defects. They cannot be helpful in understanding a realm beyond our senses. By going back along the chain of causes, we can deduce that such a realm exists, but inference can take us no further; nor can it yield valid knowledge about *abhidheya*, the process of realizing that world. That knowledge can be acquired only through revealed scripture, namely the Vedas, which are not creations of a mortal being and thus are free from the four defects described earlier.

As stated in the *Svetasvatara Upanisad* (6.8) the Vedas were sprung from the Supreme Lord at the dawn of creation: *yo brahmanam vidadhati purvam yo vai vedamsca prahinoti tasmai*, “That Lord, who created Brahma, gave him the Vedas at the beginning of creation.” *Anadi-siddha*, used in this *anuccheda*, means that they were not written at a particular date, but exist eternally like the Lord. They originally manifested in this universe within heart of Lord Brahma, the first created being, *tene brahma hrda ya adi-kavaye* (S.B. 1.1.1) and were then handed down through disciplic succession. The Vedas deliver both material and spiritual knowledge. Originally knowledge about all phenomena around us such as the trees, water, land, sky, and so forth, along with the divisions of duties for various people according to psycho-physical nature came from the Vedas. This is stated in the *Manu Samhita* (1.21) *sarvesam tu sa namani karmani ca prthak prthak veda-sabdebhya eva'dau prthaksamsthasca nirmame*. “The knowledge of the names of various objects and the respective duties of various people was obtained by Lord Brahma from the words of the Vedas and thus he propagated the division of names and duties.” Over a period of time various cultures and languages developed which became alienated from the original vedic culture.

As for acquiring transcendental knowledge, *sabda pramana*, or the Vedas is the only way. They inform us about the soul's existence beyond the body, the spiritual planets, the Supreme Lord, His pastimes and so on. All these subjects are beyond the reach of our sensual and mental faculties. Without the *sabda* method, philosophers like Lord Buddha, who did not accept the Vedas, are unable to say a word about transcendence let alone explain a means to attain it. *Sabda pramana* is so important that although Lord Buddha is counted among the incarnations of the Lord, on the strength of Vedic testimony, His philosophy is rejected, because it was not based on *sabda pramana*. All theistic orthodox schools of philosophy in India, whether monistic or dualistic, consider the Vedas as *apauruseya*, not written by any mortal being. Some modern scholars do not agree. They

speculate various dates for the composition of the Vedas. While most of them agree that the Vedas were composed before 1500 B.C., they disagree about the exact time of their composition. They have yet to arrive at a definitive conclusion.

Here Srila Jiva Gosvami says, *anadi siddha sarva purusa paramparasu*, “The Vedas are beginningless and have come down in an unbroken chain of disciplic successions”. The words *sarva purusa*, “all humans,” includes both human beings as well as the super humans, the demigods. These successions begin with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is an infallible entity in all respects. He has no taint of the four defects. Further, in *anuccheda* nine, Srila Jiva Gosvami has already shown the alternatives to be unreliable. If no other method except *apauruseya sabda* can give access to transcendental reality, how is it possible that the Vedas can be written or developed by a human being? If that was the case Jiva Gosvami would openly contradict himself, having previously rejected humans as an imperfect source of knowledge because of the inherent four defects.

We have only two possibilities about the origin of the Vedas. Either they are human compositions or they are of divine origin. In response to the first proposal we must consider that no one has been able to prove their authorship by any particular mortal. Even those scholars who speculate about when the Vedas were first composed have shed no light on the original author. They cannot give his name, nationality, occupation, qualification or other such historical details.

One may argue that the name of the author has been forgotten over time and thus it is not logical to consider the Vedas of divine origin. This argument is weak, because they have been handed down through the system of disciplic succession from antiquity to the present. Traditionally the upper classes, called dvijas, belong to a particular branch of the Vedas. Thus when studying their branch they studied the historical data related to it. Even today, when the study of the Vedas have declined, people still know the details about their *sakha*, or branch of the Vedas, who was the sage originally in charge of it and so on. Thus if the Vedas had a human composer his name would have been handed down and remembered.

On the contrary, from the works of philosophers like Kumarila Bhatta, it is understood that the Vedas are not human compositions. Indologists accept that Kumarila lived in the sixth century. At that time Vedic culture still flourished in India along with the system of disciplic succession, but even then there was no author ascribed to the Vedas. Similarly, one can research even further back and still unearth no trace of any human composer of the Vedas. They have always been revealed knowledge from the Supreme Lord and none other.

One may further argue that the author of the Vedas is forgotten because it served no purpose to remember him. This is also a weak argument for to remember the author of the Vedas is not futile. As stated above, while engaged in Vedic studies or sacrifices one recites the names of his *sakha* (branch), *gotra* (lineage), *pravara* (sub-division), and so on. If the sages that propounded the various branches are remembered, then why neglect to remember the author? Of course, the author is not at all forgotten, because all orthodox Vedic scholars know Him to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Indeed the theory of the Vedas having a human composer is a recent development advocated by persons who did not come in disciplic succession. They were mostly outsiders, who refused to believe that India had anything to offer the world in the realm of philosophy and had their own motives for minimizing the Vedic traditions, in that they were eager to convert India to Christianity. They certainly were not eager to be impartial in judging the matter of the Vedas' origin.

From lack of any definitive proof, therefore, and in light of the many reasonable arguments for their divine origin the first option ought to be discarded. As demonstrated in the last section, the human senses are incapable of approaching the inconceivable object, so even theoretically it is not possible that the Vedas could have been composed by human beings.

In addition, great scholars and saintly persons, such as Sankaracarya, Madhvacarya, Ramanujacarya, Kumarila Bhatta, Rupa Gosvami, and others accepted the Vedas as *apauruseya* and eternal. These saintly persons are famed for their renunciation, knowledge, and freedom from selfish motives. Naturally a credibility gap exists between them and contemporary mundane scholars who contest the divine origin of the Vedas, but these materialistic scholars cannot be proven free from ulterior motives, nor can their character and conduct compare favorably with that of the great *acaryas*. Another consideration, and an important one, is that the Vedas themselves repeatedly enjoin that one must first approach a guru in disciplic succession if he wants to understand the spiritual knowledge therein. Thus Vedic knowledge is verifiable and not just a collection of abstract ideas. Mundane scholars, however, puffed up with their years of text book knowledge, presume to flout this requirement, yet consider themselves authorities on Vedic knowledge. In reality, by not applying themselves to the knowledge in the prescribed way they are locked out from its mysteries. The attempt of such hapless scholars to understand the Vedas outside of the disciplic succession are like persons who try to taste honey by licking on the jar. Their labor is futile and their resultant analysis and conclusions they draw are useless.

By contrast, the great vaisnava *acaryas* all became Vedic authorities on account of their scrupulously following the injunction to surrender to a guru coming in disciplic succession. On the matter of sincerity and credibility, therefore, the verdict weighs heavily in favor of the saintly *acaryas*. Ultimately, any interested person may take to the process and verify the Vedic conclusions for himself. This requires some effort. Naturally, it is easier to give a glib opinion against the Vedas than to discipline oneself to follow its instructions, but such detractors cannot prove their negative claims.

Furthermore, even if someone says that just as modern science is evolving the Vedas evolved over a period of time, then the question arises why in the annals of recorded history did people stop making further refinements in the Vedas? If the Vedas indeed have a human source, they should have been revised and improved over time and new, improved versions should be available; but this is not the case. Rather, North or South, East or West, the same standard readings of the Vedas are found, and no older or newer versions are seen anywhere. Rather, the Vedic saints have developed a meticulous system to protect the word order of the Vedic texts. Even changing a single syllable is

considered criminal. Thus the Vedas are rightly called *śruti*, or that which is heard from the guru, with proper tone and accent of the syllables.

The Vedas are unique. Can one imagine that in a particular field of science or art we will reach the apex in knowledge, produce one standard book accepted by all, making all other books in that field obsolete? Is it conceivable that no one will make any further changes or additions to such a book, and that book will become worshipable to the people interested in that field? The reasonable, unbiased answer is “no”, and yet this is precisely the case with the Vedas for they are free of defects having emanated from the perfect source, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But if someone says “yes”, then there is no reason for debate over the authority of the Vedas.

In addition to the spiritual knowledge it contains, the Vedic literature has references to most current scientific achievements. The Vedas have sections on astronomy, medicine, yoga, music, drama, dance, algebra, civil engineering, and so on. The list is long indeed. These are all practical sciences that have been used in India centuries before the dawn of modern astronomy and medical science and other arts and sciences. His Divine Grace, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, writes in his introduction to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, “The authority of the Vedas is unchallengeable and stands without any question of doubt. The conchshell and cowdung are the bone and stool of two living beings. But because they have been recommended by the Vedas as pure, people accept them as such because of the authority of the Vedas”. Now it has been proven by scientific experimentation that cowdung is antiseptic and has medicinal value. It would be simplistic, therefore, to brush aside the Vedas as manmade. Had that being the case, renowned thinkers and powerful logicians such as Srila Jiva Gosvami and Srila Madhvacarya would have taken no stock in them.

Still, one may question the eternal nature of the Vedas for any scriptural references in support of them will necessarily come from the Vedas themselves. In logic, evidence that relies on itself for proof, or circular reasoning, is unacceptable. This makes the Vedas appear tainted with the defect of *svasrya-dosa*, or begging the question, relying on themselves to establish their nature and authority.

Circular reasoning would be a serious defect, but a closer look shows that the Vedas are an exception to this fallacy. That the Vedas rely on themselves to establish their authority is not a defect; rather it is logical, sensible. It affirms their absolute or transcendental nature, for if some other source were to confirm the authority of the Vedas, then the authority of that new source would surpass the Vedas. In which case an inquisitive person would be obliged to discard the Vedas and start all over again to analyze the authenticity of the new source. Before long this new source would need confirmation from yet another source. This could go on ad infinitum, but the absence of such a superior source with reference to the Vedas goes to show that the authority of the Vedas as *apauruṣeya śabda pramāṇa* is final.

Logically, therefore, no other *pramāṇa* can substantiate the Vedas. Traditionally, therefore, the Vedas are accepted as mother. When a person wants to know who is his father, he cannot know the answer by direct perception, nor by inference or by deduction. To know the answer he has to accept her testimony. Similarly, we have to accept the revealed knowledge of the Vedas to learn about the

reality beyond our sensual and intellectual power. The theory advanced by some scholars that the Vedas are of mundane origin is unreliable and untenable because they have not studied the Vedas in a bonafide disciplic succession. Because of the four defects and their being captivated by ulterior motives like name, fame, research funding, or even a university degree, by divine arrangement they are barred from getting any real insight about the Vedic knowledge. They have no inhibition in admitting that for the proper comprehension of any complex material subject one ought to take the help of experts in that field. In the case of the Vedic literature it is an absolute need. Its function is similar to a password protection against insincere persons who either want to exploit the Vedas or refute them. In *Bhagavad-gita* (7.25) the Supreme Lord affirms this: *naham prakasah sarvasya yoga-maya-samavrtah mudho 'yam nabhijanati loko mam ajam avyayam*.

“I am never manifest to the foolish and unintelligent. For them I am covered by My internal potency, and therefore they do not know that I am unborn and infallible.”

This applies whether He comes in His personal form or whether He reveals Himself in scripture. The Lord gives the method whereby the conditioned souls can approach Him. That method is by disciplic succession. Those unwilling to qualify themselves in that way can have no access to Him, even if they study the Vedas on their own for many lifetimes.

In conclusion, owing to the absence of any conclusive proof regarding the authorship of the Vedas by a mortal being, and by the logic known as the law of the remainder (*parisesa-nyaya*), as well as on the authority of the great *acaryas* and saints coming in the bonafide disciplic successions, and ultimately by accepting the testimony of the Vedas themselves, it is reasonably concluded that the Vedas exist eternally and are infallible means of knowledge.

Next, Srila Jiva Gosvami shows that inference cannot be an independent means in understanding the Absolute Truth.

SECTION ELEVEN SRI TATTVA SANDARBHA

TRANSLATION: This conclusion is confirmed by the following statements from the scriptures: 1. Reasoning has no sure basis (it cannot refute the conclusion of the Veda). (Brahma Sutra 2.1.11) 2. One should not apply reasoning to understand what is inconceivable. (*Mahabharata, Bhishma Parva* 5.22) 3. Scriptures are the source of knowledge of the Absolute Truth. (Brahma Sutra 1.1.3) 4. This is confirmed by the Vedas, because they are the source of knowledge of the Absolute Truth. (Brahma Sutra 2.1.27) 5. O Supreme Lord, Your Veda is the supreme eye for the forefathers, demigods, and human beings. By it they can understand Your form and qualities, along with the highest goal of life and the means to attain it, none of which can be ascertained otherwise. (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 11.20.4)

SRI JIVA TOSANI COMMENTARY

Here, using scriptural evidence, Srila Jiva Gosvami confirms his conclusion about logic reached in the previous section. Having argued that reason is not the most reliable means of acquiring knowledge,

and having used reason to establish this, he now presents appropriate Vedic references as the final proof. Again, this practice of using the Vedas to confirm an assertion from the Vedas should not be taken as circular reasoning. The Vedas are self-luminous like the sun. The sun illuminates itself with its own light, not with the help of any other source. Similarly, only the Vedas can establish themselves as infallible *pramana*. As explained in the previous section, this is not a defect in the method of *sabda pramana*, or revelation, because if the Vedas indeed carry knowledge of the Absolute Truth, no other *pramana* can verify them. And those who have approached Vedic knowledge in the prescribed way have confirmed by direct realization that the Vedas do carry knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

Another consideration is that knowledge of the inconceivable reality is the objective, and upon analysis no source gives us that opportunity except the Vedas. For example, if all the best logicians, nuclear physicists, astro-physicists, and others in leading departments of science and philosophy from the past, present, and future were to assemble they would be unable to shed any light on the nature of transcendence. Any proposed conclusion will be a subjective speculation, subject to endless refutation and counter refutation. Understanding this, Srila Jiva Gosvami goes directly to the heart of the matter by quoting Vedic authority.

Srila Vyasadeva gave the conclusion of all the Vedas in the Vedanta Sūtras, also called Brahma Sūtras, in short aphorisms. Sūtra 2.1.11 says that logic has no absolute stance because logical conclusions are prone to change. Logical conclusions are based upon human perception and intelligence and these faculties are unreliable due to the four defects. Furthermore, since intellect varies in capacity and type from person to person, so do their conclusions. Logic has its limitations, therefore, it is inconclusive unless supported by the scriptures. In *Bhaktirasamṛta Sindhu* (1.1.46) Srila Rupa Gosvami quotes a verse from the Vākya-pāṇīya (1.34) to this effect: *yatnenapadito'pyarthah kusalairanumatrbhih abhiyuktatarairanyairanyathaivopapadyate* — “Even the conclusions established with great endeavor by expert logicians are contradicted by stronger logicians and new conclusions are established.”

We have experience of this in the fields of modern science and philosophy with their endlessly theorizing about the origin of the universe and the meaning of life. Logic, therefore, is not a reliable independent method in the quest for knowledge of the Absolute. But this does not mean that all logic is useless. Indeed the conclusion to reject logic as not fully reliable is itself based on logic supported by scriptural references. Logic is certainly to be used to understand the Vedic statements. In this connection, the *Brhadaranyakopaniṣad* states, *atma va are drastavyah srotayo mantavyo nididhyasitavyo maitreyi* (2.4.5.) “The Self, my dear Maitreyi should be realized, should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon”. Here the word *mantavya* refers to logical understanding. One should apply logic to properly understand the Vedic injunctions, but logic that runs contrary to their conclusions is to be rejected. It can never be superior to the statements of the Vedas, which are free from human misgivings. While discussing this topic in *Sarvasamvadini*, Srila Jiva Gosvami quotes the Kurma Purana: *purvaparavirodhena ko'nvartho'bhimato bhavet ityadyamuhanam tarkah*

suskatarkanca varjayet — “Understanding the meaning of a scriptural statement by deliberating over the preceding and following statements is called logic, but one should abandon dry logic”.

The best of example of dry logic is seen among speculative philosophers. Generally, they reason their way to a prior conclusion, to which they are already attached, and in their determination to establish it they lose all objectivity. They therefore will disregard scriptural injunctions that do not support their conclusions. Ultimately they have no success, because the inconceivable transcendental plane is not understood by any amount of speculation. Such persons interest in philosophy amounts to a futile mental exercise with no tangible result. And, before long, no matter how profound and mesmerizing their vision, some other powerful logician subdues them. The Vedas enjoin, therefore, that those who seek the Absolute Truth should abandon dry logic, but not all logic. Using logic with an aim to understand the Absolute Truth as presented in scripture is accepted by Lord Kṛṣṇa as one of His opulences (B.G. 10.32), *vadah pravadatam aham*, “Among logicians I am the conclusive truth.” Thus Srīla Jīva Gosvāmī has rightly accepted *anumana* as one of the *pramanas*.

Srīla Jīva Gosvāmī also quotes *Mahabharata*, which explains that logic has its limitations and should not be applied to inconceivable realities. For example, one will certainly fail to understand Lord Kṛṣṇa’s childhood pastimes such as “Damabandhana Līla”, or His getting tied with ropes, if one resorts to logic. When Mother Yāsodā tried to tie Kṛṣṇa, to her amazement all her ropes joined together fell short, but the black thread around Kṛṣṇa’s waist did not break nor did His waist become inflated. Such inconceivable behavior of the Absolute Person is entirely beyond all logical faculties and can only be understood on the authority of Vedic testimony or *sabda pramana*.

Jīva Gosvāmī then quotes two more *Brahma Sūtras* (1.1.3 and 2.1.27) which state emphatically that the Absolute Truth can be understood only from the revealed scriptures. Finally, he quotes from *Srīmad-Bhagavatam* to show that not only human beings but even superhumans like the demigods need the help of the Vedas. Thus he emphasizes the need of the Vedas as the flawless means to understand the Absolute Truth for everyone humans, subhumans or superhumans.

In the next section, Srīla Jīva Gosvāmī begins establishing the importance of the *Puranas* over the Vedas.

SECTION TWELVE SRI TATTVA SANDARBHA

TRANSLATION: But at present (the complete text of the Vedas is unavailable and owing to a decrease in human memory) it is difficult to study the whole body of the Vedas. Further, because of their abstruse nature the available portions are difficult to understand. In addition great thinkers, commentators on the Vedas, give contradictory conclusions to the Vedic statements. Analyzing the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* is worthwhile, therefore, as they have the same nature as the Vedas and are decisive in giving the meaning of the Vedas.

Besides, the meaning of the unavailable (or difficult) portions of the Vedas can be inferred with the help of the *Itihasas* and *Puranas*. Thus at present only the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* are capable of yielding valid knowledge. Therefore the *Mahabharata* and *Manu Smṛti* state, “One should explain

the meaning of the Vedas with the help of the *Itihasas* and *Puranas*". (M.B. Adi Parva 1.267) Elsewhere it is stated, "The *Puranas* are called by that name because they complete (*Purana*)". One cannot explain the meaning of the Vedas with something that is not Vedic in nature, just as one cannot add lead to an incomplete golden necklace to make it complete."

But the doubt arises that if the word Veda includes the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* then we must search for separate books called *Itihasas* and *Puranas*, otherwise they will have no oneness with the Vedas. The answer is that the verses in the Vedas, and the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* are *apauruseya* in nature and contain knowledge about the Lord and His energies, as such there is no difference between them. Still, there is a difference, because of accent and word order, which is strictly followed in the Vedas.

Oneness of the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* with the *rg* and other Vedas, with respect to their *apauruseya* nature, is indicated in the Madhyandina Sruti, "My dear Maitreyi, the *Rg*, *Yajur*, *Sama*, and *Atharva Veda*, *Itihasas* and *Puranas*...are manifest from the breath of the Supreme Lord" (*Brhadaranyaka* 2.4.10).

SRI JIVA TOSANI COMMENTARY: In the previous *anucchedas* Srila Jiva Gosvami established the Vedas as the valid means of acquiring knowledge about the Supreme. Specifically, he established the validity of the *Rg*, *Yajur*, *Sama*, and *Atharva Vedas* as *apauruseya sabda*. Now he points out the practical difficulties in studying them. The first difficulty is the unavailability of the complete text of the Vedas. Originally the Veda was one, then at the advent of Kali-yuga Srila Vyasadeva divided it into four, *vyadadhad yajnasantatyai vedamekam caturvidham* (S.B. 1.4.19). Then, as explained in the *Kurma Purana* (52.19, 20), the four Vedas were further divided into 1130 branches: *ekavimsatibhedena rgvedam krtavan pura sakhanantu satenaiva yajurvedamathakarot samavedam sahasrena sakhanam pravibheda sah atharvanamatho vedam vibheda navakena tu*. "The *Rgveda* was divided into 21 branches and the *Yajurveda* into 100 branches, the *Samaveda* into 1,000 branches and the *Atharvaveda* into 9 branches."

Further, every branch has four subdivisions called *Samhita*, *Brahmana*, *Aranyaka*, and *Upanisad*. So all in all, the vedas consist of 1130 *Samhitas*, 1130 *Brahmanas*, 1130 *Aranyakas*, and 1130 *Upanisads*, a total of 4520 titles. By the influence of time, however, many texts have been lost. At present only about 11 *Samhitas*, 18 *Brahmanas*, 7 *Aranyakas*, and 220 *Upanisads* are available. This is less than 6 of the original Vedas.

The second difficulty is language. The Vedas are written in Sanskrit, which is of two types--*vaidika* and *laukika*. Only *vaidika* Sanskrit is used in the Vedas and to understand it one has to learn extra rules of grammar, which require years of study. Even so the Vedic verses are cryptic and it is impossible to decipher them without hearing from a bonafide guru, coming in disciplic succession. And again, even before studying the Vedas one must study their six limbs called *vedanga*. These six limbs are: 1. *Siksha*, the science of pronunciation; 2. *Kalpa*, the process of performing sacrifice; 3. *Vyakarana*, the rules of grammar; 4. *Niruktam*, the meanings of difficult words used in the Vedas

and their derivations; 5. *Jyotisa*, astronomy and astrology; 6. *Chandas*, Vedic meters. Each of these limbs is extensive and requires years of study.

To further complicate matters, the coming of Kali-yuga has brought a decrease in human memory. In former times there were no printing facilities. A student had to memorize all he learnt from his spiritual master simply by hearing, but this is no longer possible. In this age food, water, and air are polluted. All these factors have taken their toll on human memory making it difficult to study even the available 6 of the Vedic texts, what to speak of the entire four Vedas and their branches. The conclusion of Srila Jiva Gosvami is that although the four Vedas are *sabda pramana*, in the present age it is not practical to go through them for enquiring after the Absolute Truth.

As an alternative, someone may suggest that even if all the Vedas are not available and they are difficult to understand, why not just study the *Vedanta Sutra*, the summary of the Vedic conclusions? To this Jiva Gosvami replies that various thinkers differ over the meaning of Vedanta Sutra, so this will only lead to confusion. Besides, there are thinkers like Gautama, Kapila, Jaimini, and others, who have other philosophies, why accept Vedanta rather than one of their explanations? For all these reasons it will be impossible to understand *sambandha*, *abhideya*, and *prayojana* even with the help of the Vedas. To resolve this dilemma Srila Jiva Gosvami proposes an alternative, study the *Itihasas* and *Puranas*.

The *Itihasas* and *Puranas* are easier to understand than the Vedas, because they are written in *laukika*, or spoken Sanskrit, in contrast to the Vedas which are written in Vedic Sanskrit, which is not spoken. Further, the esoteric meanings of the Vedas are more accessible, because the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* are told in story form. And whereas only the dvijas, or the twice born people, are allowed to study the Vedas that restriction does not apply to the *Itihasas* and *Puranas*. Anyone may study them. Even their prime speaker, Suta Gosvami, is not a *dvija*. They carry the same conclusions as the Vedas and having come from the same source, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they are free from the four human defects and are also *sabda pramana*. Thus the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* are as reliable as the four Vedas.

The *Itihasas* and *Puranas* are identical with the Vedas, but that does not mean that they are one with the Vedas in every sense. Otherwise the words Itihasa and Purana would simply be a different name for the Vedas. The Vedas are written in Vedic Sanskrit, which contains accent--*Udatta* (high), *Svarita* (medium) and *Anudatta* (low). Hence the meaning of a word can change according to the change of accent. An example of this is in the history of the demon Vratasura, who was created by means of a mantra during a sacrifice. This demon was supposed to kill Indra, but during the sacrifice the priests pronounced the mantra--*indra sato vivardhasva*--with the wrong accent. The result was just the opposite: Indra killed Vratasura.

Another significant difference between the four Vedas and the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* is the word order, which is fixed in the case of the Vedas. Nobody has the authority to change even a syllable of the Vedic texts and it has been maintained in this order since the beginning of creation. Techniques have been devised, such as *Pada-patha*, *Krama-patha*, *Ghana-patha*, *Jata-patha*, and so

on for keeping the word order intact. No interpolation or juggling is possible; the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* are not so rigid and therefore the readings may be different in different yuga cycles. This does not occur with the four Vedas. Because no special techniques are used to keep the order of the words of the *Puranas* and *Itihasas* intact we find differences in readings between different editions.

The *Mahabharata*, an *Itihasa*, was compiled by Srila Vyasa for people of this age specifically because they are not qualified to understand the Vedas. This is stated in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 1.4.25: *strisudradvijabandhunam trayi na srutigocara karmasreyasi mudhanam sreya evam bhavadiha iti bharatamakhyanam kṛpaya munina krtam*. “Out of compassion, the sage thought it wise that this would enable men to achieve the ultimate goal of life. Thus he compiled the great historical narration called the *Mahabharata* for women, laborers, and friends of the twice born, who are not qualified to study the Vedas.”

Srila Jiva Gosvami says that the *Puranas* are called so because they make the Vedas complete. Does he mean the Vedas are incomplete? No, but the *Puranas* are a form of explanatory, supplementary literature that help us to understand the terse, cryptic message of the Vedas. Like the Vedas, they convey knowledge of the Absolute Truth. To perform this function they must be of the same transcendental quality as the Vedas. The Skanda Purana (4.95.12) therefore states: *vede ramayane caiva purane bharate tatha adavante ca madhye ca harih sarvatra giyate* — “In the Vedas, Ramayana, *Puranas*, and in *Mahabharata* Lord Hari is glorified everywhere—in the beginning, middle, and end.”

The *Itihasas* and *Puranas*, therefore, having emanated from the same source as the Vedas and having the same conclusion as the Vedas, they have equal authority to the four Vedas.

Next, Srila Jiva Gosvami explains further about the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* not being inferior to the Vedas. This verse is not in the current edition of the *Bhavisya Purana*.

SECTION THIRTEEN SRI TATTVA SANDARBHA

TRANSLATION: The *Prabhasa Khanda* of the *Skanda Purana* states therefore: Previously, Lord Brahma, the grandfather of the demigods, performed severe penances and thereafter the Vedas appeared along with their Pada and Krama texts and their six limbs. Then the unchanging complete *Purana*, the embodiment of all scriptures, composed of eternal sound, sacred in nature, and consisting of one billion verses emanated from the mouth of Lord Brahma. Know that of the various divisions of that *Purana* the *Brahma Purana* is the first... (Sk.P. 2.3-5)

The figure “one billion verses” is mentioned here because that is the number of verses existing on Brahmaloka. The *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Third Canto, states, “Maitreya said, ‘Beginning from the front face of Brahma, in order the four Vedas—Rg, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva—became manifest”. (SB. 3.12.37)

And later on, “Then he created the fifth Veda—the *Itihasas* and *Puranas*—from his mouths, since he could see the past, present and future”. (SB. 3.12.39) Moreover, the word “Veda” has been used here for the *Itihasas* and *Puranas*.

Elsewhere it is said: “The *Puranas* are the fifth Veda”; “The *Itihasas* and *Puranas* are called the fifth Veda”. (SB. 1.4.20) “He taught the Vedas along with the fifth Veda, the *Mahabharata*”, (M.Bh. Moksadharmā 340.21).

If the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* were not Vedic then to group them as the fifth Veda in the preceeding verses would be highly improper, since only objects of the same kind are grouped together. Also, the Bhavisya Purana states, “The *Mahabharata* is called the fifth Veda of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipayana Vyasa”.*

A reference is found in the *Chandogya Upanisad* of the Kauthumiya branch of the Samaveda (7.1.2), “O venerable Sir, I studied the ṛg, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva Veda as well as the *Itihasas* and *Puranas*, which are the fifth Veda”. Therefore, the well-known objection, that the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* listed in the *Bṛhadaranyakopanisad* 2.4.10 are included in the four Vedas and have no separate existence, is refuted. The *Skanda Purana* states, “The *Brahma Purana* is the first...”(as quoted previously).

SRI JIVA TOSANI COMMENTARY

Here Srila Jiva Gosvami substantiates the statement from the *Bṛhadaranyakopanisad* (2.4.10) which establish the vedic nature of the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* by giving more evidence from the *Puranas*, *Itihasas*, and Upanisads. From these references the following is clear: 1. The *Puranas* and *Itihasas* have the same source as the four Vedas. 2. They are *apauruṣeya* in nature. 3. They are in the same category as the Vedas and are in fact the fifth Veda.

Srila Jiva Gosvami here refers to a famous objection that the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* are part of the four Vedas. While explaining verse 2.4.10 of the *Bṛhadaranyakopanisad* some followers of the *mīmāṃsaka* school hold that the words *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* refer to the historical passages found in some of the Vedas and not to separate works. For example, these *śruti* statements, *yato va imāni bhūtāni jayante*, “From him these beings take birth etc.”; *sah brahmanā sṛjati rudreṇa vilāpayati harirādīranādīh*, “He creates through Brahma, destroys through Rudra, but Lord Hari is the source of all and is beginningless Himself etc.” are all referred to as “Purana” since they pertain to creation and destruction, which is part of the subject matter of the *Puranas*.

They further argue that over an immense period of time many of these portions of the Vedas were lost and the available parts were difficult to understand. Therefore, as stated in *Srīmad-Bhagavatam* 1.4.25, out of mercy Srila Vyasa wrote the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* for the benefit of less-intelligent people in Kali-yuga. Hence the *Itihāsa* and *Puranas* under discussion are part of the Vedas and not independent books hence it is incorrect to conclude that they are the fifth Veda.

Srila Jiva Gosvami refutes this with references from the Vedas, as well as from the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* themselves, to establish their rightful position as the fifth Veda, having emanated independently from the mouth of Lord Brahma. If they were only parts within the Vedas then there was no need to call them the fifth Veda in the references cited. In addition, the *Samhitas*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas*, *Upanisads*, *Kalpasutras*, *Dharmasutras*, *Grhya Sutras*, *Puranas*, *Itihasas*,

and other *smṛti* texts have many references about the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* being *apauruseya* and Vedic in nature. Except for the last three the rest are all different portions of the original four Vedas. Some of these references are: *raḥ samani chandamsi puranam yajusa saha ucchistajajnire sarve divi deva divisritah* (Atharvaveda 11.7.24) “The Rg, Sama, Yajur, and Atharvaveda, along with the *Puranas*, and all the demigods residing in the heavenly planets appeared from the Supreme Lord.”

sa brhatim disamanuvyacalat tamitihasasca puranam ca gathasca itihasasya ca sa vai puranasya ca gathanam ca narasamsinam ca priyamdhama bhavati ya evam veda — “He moved favorably towards Brhati and thus the *Itihasas*, *Puranas*, *Gathas*, and *Narasamsi* became favorable to him. One who knows this verily becomes the dear abode of the *Itihasas* and *Puranas*, *Gathas* and *Narasamsi*”. (Atharva 15.6.10,12)

evamime sarve veda nirmittah sakalpah sarahsyah sabrahmanah sopanisatkah setihasah sanvakhyatah sapuranah — “In this way all the Vedas became manifest along with the *Kalpas*, *Rahasyas*, *Brahmanas*, *Upanisads*, *Itihasas*, *Anvakhyatas* and *Puranas*”. (*Gopath Brahmana Purva* 2.10)

nama va rgvedo yajurvedah samaveda atharva- nascaturtha itihas puranah pancamo vedanam vedah.... — “Indeed Rg, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva are the names of the four Vedas. The *Itihasas* and *Puranas* are the fifth Veda.” (Ch. U. 7.1.4)

mimamsate ca yo vedan sadbhirangaih savistaraih itihasa-puranani sa bhaved veda paragah — “One who studies thoroughly the Vedas along with it’s six limbs and the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* becomes a true knower of the Veda. (*Vyasasmṛti* 4.45) In the next *anuccheda* Śrīla Jīva Gosvami explains why the *Itihasas* and *Puranas* are counted as the fifth Veda.

Appendix 11 — The Free Will Problem

1. God is omniscient and knows therefore beforehand as an eternal truth each choice (action) that each human will decide on. If this is the case then humans cannot freely choose (act), otherwise than in the way God knows they will (and if they do act contrary to God’s knowledge, then God can not be omniscient). If God knows humans’ sins before they commit them, and the sins must occur according to God’s knowledge, then how can humans avoid those sins, and how can humans be said to have free will?

2. If God has complete foreknowledge of everything that will happen, and is also omnipotent, then God must have organized all things to happen the way in which God has foreknowledge that they will happen. If this is the case then how can it be maintained that humans have free will.

(From: *Harper Collins Dictionary Philosophy*, Peter A. Angeles)

Appendix 12 — Mental speculation and philosophical speculation

Śrīla Prabhupāda, letter to: Chaturbhus – Bombay, 21 January, 1972

My Dear Chaturbhus,

Please accept my blessings. I am happy to receive your nice letter of January 10, 1972, and I am pleased to note that you are asking very intelligent questions. that is natural position for the neophyte devotee who is sincerely seeking to understand what is the Absolute Truth. So I am very much englanded to hear that you are very intelligent boy, like your father, and that your whole family is advancing in Krishna Consciousness. May Krishna give you all blessings.

Lord Caitanya met Moulana in Sara, U.P., not at Allahabad. His process was to take a quotation from the Koran and convince the Moulana that Krishna Consciousness or pure love of Godhead in mood of selfless devotional service is the ultimate goal of life.

As for the difference between mental speculation and philosophical speculation, we take it that everything is known by the psychological action of the mind, so that philosophical speculation is the same as mental speculation if it is merely the random or haphazard activity of the brain to understand everything and making theories, “if’s” and “maybe’s.” But if philosophical speculation is directed by Sastra and Guru, and if the goal of such philosophical attempts is to achieve Visnu, then that philosophical speculation is not mental speculation. It is just like this: Krishna syas in *Bhagavad-gita* that “I am the taste of water.” Philosophical speculation in the accepted sense then means to try to understand, under the direction of Sastra and Guru, just how Krishna is the taste of water. The points of *Bhagavad-gita*, though they are simple and complete, can be understood from unlimited angles of vision. So our philosophy is not dry, like mental speculation. The proper function of the brain or psychological activity is to understand everything through Krishna’s perspective or point-of-view, and so there is no limit to that understanding because Krishna is unlimited, and even though it can be said that the devotee who knows Krishna, he knows everything (15th Chapter), still, the philosophical process never stops and the devotee continues to increase his knowledge even though he knows everything. Try to understand this point, it is a very good question.

Lord Caitanya may have long hair in his early grhastha life, but that does not mean that we should imitate Lord Caitanya. Caitanya also had shaven head and sikha. The important thing is that we follow the regulative guidelines as laid down by great saints and *acaryas* in our line, and so it is recommended that we wear clean-shaven heads. but there is no hard and fast rule in this respect. If it is practical to grow hairs out, that can be done. But it is not that we may imitate Lord Caitanya by growing big hairs.

Hoping this will meet you in good health and happy mood. Your father is serving nicely in Delhi by printing our books and magazines in Hindi language, and I am very much pleased with him

also. Now you protect your good mother and brothers and sisters, help them to advance more and more in Krishna Consciousness by holding chanting in your house regularly daily and by having altar. If you become very serious to have the ultimate satisfaction of life, then I think that you will practice this KC process very enthusiastically and be successful in all respects.

Your ever well-wisher,
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Appendix 13 — The Therapeutic Revolution: How Christian Counseling is changing the church

Tim Stafford

LAST NOVEMBER, 2,300 CHRISTIAN mental-health professionals gathered in Atlanta the largest meeting yet of a vocation that barely existed 25 years ago. While psycho-therapists tend to be a restrained and colorless lot, a touch of euphoria tinged the conference. Meeting rooms were jammed. Editors from evangelical publishers cruised the halls in search of the next Minirth and Meyer. The line up of speakers was dazzling James Dobson, Chuck Swindoll, Charles Stanley, Larry Crab to name only the brightest luminaries. Atlanta '92 gathered a movement that is transforming the church.

Without any central institution nor any single leader, and aims; without anyone paying attention, Christian psychology has moved to the center of evangelicalism. Psychologists write best-selling Christian books. Psychologists are prominent on Christian television and radio shows: they are the ones we look to for guidance on family problems and personal growth. Today, if you want to become a successful conference speaker, the surest route is psychology graduate school not seminary. A 1991 *Christianity Today* reader survey suggests that evangelicals are far more likely to take problems to a counselor than to a pastor. Thirty three percent sought professional help, versus ten percent who looked to a pastor. Paul Meyer of the Minirth-Meyer clinics says, "When we started psychiatry 16 years ago, people came in the back door, because Christians weren't supposed to need help. Now they come early so they can chat with all their friends."

Pastors, too, have joined the search, realizing that their congregations care more for homilies on "Healing the Hearts of the Inner Child" than on "The Missionary Mind of the Apostle Paul." Words like *addiction*, *self-esteem*, and *dysfunctional* sprinkle many Sunday morning sermons. Evangelical seminaries find their counseling departments growing fast. Wheaton College, a bastion of evangelical orthodoxy, is launching its first doctoral program, not in theology or biblical studies, but in psychology.

Not everyone is happy about these developments. Even at Atlanta '92, one heard expressions of concern. James Dobson said, "If I had to boil everything I have to say to you into one thing, it

would be to be followers of Jesus Christ first, and mental-health professionals second. And keep it in that order.” Chuck Swindoll warned, “There’s a lot of schlocky stuff being passed off as Christian counseling by a lot of schlocky people.”

Psychologist Gary Collins, Atlanta 92’s national coordinator, warned of two dangers in his keynote speech: “Number one, that we will abandon the church. And the second danger is that our field will take over the church. Nobody suggested any danger that Christian psychology would simply wither away, a passing fad. That seems impossible for a movement with a wide range of training schools at institutions like Fuller, Biola, and Wheaton, and its own psychiatric hospital units run by entrepreneurial Christian companies like Minirth-Meier, Rapha and New Life. Thousands of professionals have staked their careers on Christian counseling, and thousands more are pointed that direction. Already psychology has transformed the church and it will continue to do so.

The question is whether the ultimate end will be good.

Three Waves

David Powlison, Professor of practical Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, and a critic of Christian psychotherapy identifies three stages in its growth. The first stage during the fifties and sixties launched a modest evangelical interest. A small professional fellowship the Christian Association for Psychological Studies CAPS was formed in 1952. Clyde Narramore a southern Californian school psychologist hosted a radio program. Paul Tournier’s writings spurred interest. Fuller Theological Seminary started its graduate school of Psychology in 1965. Some energetic young Christians—James Dobson, Larry Grace, Frank Minirth and Paul Meier among them—entered the field despite warnings that it would prove hostile to their faith.

The second stage began in 1970 Powlison thinks, with the publication of Jay Adams’s *Competent to Counsel*. Adams a Westminster Theological Seminary professor, was sharply critical of psycho-therapy, insisting that all counseling ought to be based on the Bible rather than godless psychological theories. Christian psychologists resisted Adams’s critique but took his point. Their rallying cry became *integration*. Psychological theories would be tested by Scripture; theology and psychotherapy would stimulate each other to new insights. Adams’s critique, seems ironically, to have spurred on the growth of Christian psychotherapy, making it more self-consciously evangelical. During this period a number of training schools were founded, and prominent evangelical seminaries like Trinity (In Deerfield, Ill.) and Dallas added psychologists and psychiatrists to their faculty. Minirth and Meier (See “The accidental revolutionaries” beginning on page 30) founded a Christian psychiatric clinic in Dallas and were swamped with patients.

Powlison’s third stage begins in the mid-eighties, when, he writes in an essay in *Power Religion*, “The psychological river went to flood stage.” What had been a rising stream of influence broke out of its banks, “entering evangelical religion in almost every setting.”

Comments Paul Meier, “We’ve been fighting a battle getting Christians to get help. It’s not a battle anymore.”

With that success has come a resurgence of concern. A set of adamant critics—Dave Hunt, John MacArthur, and Martin and Deidre Bobgan—has attacked psychotherapy wholesale. Subtler criticisms come from men like Powlison, Os, Guinness, and Paul Vitz, a professor of psychology at New York University. They see some value in psychotherapy, but worry that, masquerading as “Christian”, it will seduce the church.

Yet some of psychology’s most thoughtful Christian leaders express very similar concerns. “We agree with Christian critics of psychology such as Jay Adams,” write Wheaton College psychology professors Stanton Jones and Richard Butman, “who say that the counseling processes are of such a nature that they must be thoroughly reconceptualized from a biblical foundation to lay claim to the adjective ‘Christian’.”

Fuller school of psychology dean Archibald Hart adds, “A lot of Christian psychology is theologically bankrupt. We haven’t struggled with the great themes of the Christian gospel. We’ve been pragmatic. We try to help people with their emotions, but we don’t have a theology of emotion.”

Seven Questions For Psychotherapy

1.) *Who are these guys (the authority question)*

Martin and Deidre Bobgan are relentless critics of psychotherapy. They have published a series of fearless and detailed broadsides—fearless because their attacks on such best-selling authors as James Dobson, Larry Crab, Frank Minirth and Paul Meier have led Christian publishers to stop publishing the Bobgans’ books. Yet they go on self-publishing such titles as *Psychoheresy* and *12 steps to Destruction*.

Their attacks are indiscriminate—like a person set upon by a swarm of bees, the hit at anything—but underneath rages a very fair question. *Who are these guys?* they seem to ask. *Why should we listen when they tell us how to raise our children, how to grow as persons, how to understand ourselves? Why invite them to the seats of honor at Bible conferences, on Christian radio stations, in evangelical bookstores? What is their authority?*

It is a question not often asked in this psychological age, but it deserves an answer. Some psychologists claim the authority of science. They think of psychology as offering neutral facts about the mind, and true scientific facts can not contradict scripture. That is a somewhat outdated view of science, however. Ever since the work of science historian T.S. Kuhn, science is not thought to be so objective—particularly in a field like psychology.

Beyond that, psychology as a whole is not at issue: psychotherapy is, and its theories run far beyond science. According to the Wheaton professors Jones and Butman, writing in *Modern Psychotherapies*, “On the whole, scientific studies show that participation in psychotherapy is better than no psychotherapy at all for most individuals with a wide variety of problems, and that the general effect is ‘significant’. The research to date has failed to show the superiority of one therapeutic approach over another.” Further, “The few studies on specifically Christian approaches

of counseling tend to be poorly designed and executed from a methodological perspective, so optimistic statements about their effectiveness should be taken with a ‘grain of salt’.

“I think the critics need to ask, ‘Why are people so interested in psychology?’ The thought is that we ought to go back to the old way. But the old way wasn’t working.”

—Bruce Narramore

By psychology’s own reckoning therapy is effective, but not earth-shatteringly so. “When I train practitioners,” says Jones, “I try to concentrate in areas where there are specific, well-indicated results—that is, for autistic children. It seems to me that you are reaching well beyond that when you set yourself up as an expert in human growth and welfare. There’s no evidence that psychologists and psychiatrists are that.”

There is another kind of authority, however: that of what Jones calls “a reasonably wise person.” Psychologists, Christians or not, have spent a great deal of time attending carefully to real people. Remembering his early days as a therapist, Larry Crab says that, “psychology gave me a slice of what life is really like.” Sitting for thousands of hours with hurting individuals and families, therapists have observed a lot of how people think, what moves them, how they avoid facing their problems, how they relate as families and so on. This is far from the absolute authority that would make you turn to psychologists and say, “Here, take over the church.” It does, however, make them worth listening to—especially if you sense that the church has not been doing well with hurting people. Bruce Narramore, a professor at Bioia’s Rosemead Graduate School of Psychology, points out that Proverbs’ emphasis on practical wisdom. “The book says it’s not all in the book. You need wise counselors.”

2. Doesn’t Scripture tell us all we need to know for salvation?

John MacArthur has become the most visible critic of psychology since the publication of his book *Our Sufficiency in Christ*. In a radio debate with psychiatrist Paul Meier, he asked, “Are we saying today in effect, that, yeah, we believe all our sufficiency is in Christ, but that work can’t start until we go to psychology? We can’t really believe that. . . If a person spiritually comes to the resources in Christ, walks in the Spirit, is filled with the Spirit and [is] obeying the Word of God, that’s going to take care of everything.”

To which Meier answered, “I don’t think you have a right to limit Christ’s sufficiency.” Christ can work through all kinds of means, Meier believes, including psychology.”

That is the heart of the issue: Does the Bible tell us all we need to know about how to help people?

Steve Arterburn, head of the New Life Treatment Centers and a well-known writer and speaker in the Christian recovery movement, answers that “the Bible is sufficient for what it does. Nowhere does it say in the Bible that if you vary your tone of voice, use illustrations, and use simple, vivid

words, you'll be a more effective pastor. There are communication skills and they are just as true for preachers as for anyone else. Those techniques have helped thousands come to Christ."

Yet psychology offers more than techniques. Most theories seek to explain why people do what they do, and how they can become whole. There is a broad overlap with Scripture. Scripture does not describe every aspect of human behavior; it does not tell us about anorexia for example, nor does it catalog strategies of denial, by which human beings avoid facing their problems.

"There are two dangers: Number one that we will abandon the church. And the second danger is that our field will take over the church."

— Gary Collins

The question is whether psychology is truly helpful in what it adds to Scripture, and whether psychological explanations *include* the kind of information Scripture gives about human motives and behavior. Psychology doesn't usually mention rebellion against God for example, as a mainspring of human motivation. How then can it give a true picture of humanity?

3. If the unconscious is so important, why doesn't the Bible tell us about it?

The Bobgans criticize Larry Crab, among others, for accepting a Freudian view of the unconscious. "The idea of the unconscious as a hidden region of the mind with powerful needs and motivational energy is not supported by the Bible or science," they write. "The focus of the Bible in relationship to sanctification is not on so-called psychological needs, but on knowing and obeying the will of God... God does not promise to expose and reveal all the tangled motives of anyone's heart."

This is a major dividing line between psychology and many of its hard-line Christian critics, Christian psychotherapists say that while the bible does not describe the unconscious per se, particularly in a strict Freudian sense, it has plenty to say about people who are deluded. It tells of a deceitful heart and of secret sins. People can be quite unaware, psychotherapists say, of what is driving their lives. You have to get under the surface, to the shadowy region of half-hidden motives and unhealed wounds.

Henry Cloud, a psychologist at Minirth-Meier West, says, "You are talking about two different views of sanctification. [The critics] have a basic stance against the interior against looking inside. They say, don't look at yourself, look at the Lord. Yet Scripture shows that everyone who meets the Lord falls on his face and sees himself."

4. How can a Christian accept psychology's emphasis on the self? Didn't Jesus tell us to deny ourselves?

"I believe that the Bible is the only textbook of psychology."

—John MacArthur

There are two problems here: one of terminology and one of theology. Where Jesus spoke of self-denial, he was talking about sacrificing your own interests. Psychotherapists mean something different: they talk about *self* as the person each of us “sees” when we think of ourselves. You cannot “deny” that. As Archibald Hart writes, “To insist that a person must not have feelings toward the self...is to describe a person who doesn’t exist. For good or ill, humans possess a self and need help in dealing with that self.”

Don Matzat writes, “Many Christian parents have read to their children the story of *The Little Engine that Could*. When our children took their first steps or attempted to ride their first bicycle did we not bolster their self-confidence? ‘C’mon Johnny, you can do it!’ parents shout at little league baseball games. It has never been considered inappropriate for Christians, any more than for non-Christians, to encourage their children or boost their self-esteem in this way.”

The deeper question is whether psychotherapy encourages an idolatry of the self. Henry Cloud warns of therapists who encourage people to wallow indefinitely in their ‘entitled narcissism’

“A lot of Christian psychology is theologically bankrupt. We haven’t struggled with the great themes of the Christian gospel.”

—Archibald Hart

Larry Crabb senses a tendency in Christian therapists to say, “God’s number one commitment is to help us to get over our problems.” While trying to help hurting people, Christian counselors “can reinforce a fallen mindset which consists of ‘I’ve got to find some way the help me feel the way I want to feel.’”

It is hard to deny that people really do have needs. Still, the question remains: If you build your system on filling human needs, where does God fit? Is he the Lord of all, so that our first and only absolute need is to worship and obey him? Does psychology encourage us to think of him mainly as a source of inspiration and encouragement, a benign and accommodating figure who lives for our benefit?

5. *The recovery movement treats sins as “addiction” and “disease.” Whatever happened to sin?*

The “recovery movement” has history and beliefs quite distinct from the rest of psychology, and many psychotherapists are critical of it. It is a popular—some would say faddish—movement, which grew out of Alcoholics Anonymous. Recovery’s most basic component is regular supportive groups of people talking honestly about their problems. Lately this lay-led movement has been embraced by professionals. Recovery has been a powerful engine in the rise of Christian psychotherapy, for Recovery’s free use of Christian concepts has provided a bridge between traditional psychotherapy and Christian people. The only trouble is, those concepts have been stretched to fit a variety of religious and irreligious contexts. Recovery means a lot of different things to different people.

AA's "disease model" of alcoholism is a primary point of criticism, along with the much wider use of "addiction" in the recovery movement. Stanton Peele writes, "Disease notions. . . legitimize, reinforce and excuse the behavior in question—convincing people, contrary to all evidence, that their behavior is not their own."

It does not necessarily work that way, however. AA, for example, does not normally make alcoholics irresponsible; rather, it helps them to act responsibly. That is because while the "disease model" is an inaccurate medical diagnosis, it is an accurate analogy for sin. As sinners, we are caught in a web of sin, from which we cannot escape by making moral resolutions. We need to call for help, both from God and from fellow sinners. We will do that only when we have realized our own helplessness. Just as a sick person must give up on his or her own self-cure and go to a doctor, so we sinners must abandon our attempts to fix up ourselves. That is precisely what AA's 12 Steps encourage us to do.

The recovery movement brings some powerful reforming forces to the church, chief among which is down-to-earth insistence that everyone needs help. As Henry Cloud writes, "In the church, it is culturally unacceptable to have problems; that is called being sinful. In the AA group, it is culturally unacceptable to be perfect; that is called denial."

Which stance is more biblical? He asks.

On the other hand, "God as we understand him"—the 12 Steps' designation of the Higher Power—is a profoundly ambivalent phrase. It can mean "God insofar as I, in my limitations, know him thus far." It can also mean "God as I choose to define him." That latter meaning creates a human-centered religion, which is just what some accuse psychotherapy of being.

6. If psychologists really base their therapy on the Bible, why charge? Shouldn't God's Word be delivered free?

Christian psychotherapy is vividly commercial. Atlanta '92 included one standing-room-only seminar on "How to get referrals from the clergy." A woman from Kansas raised her hand and said that, at pastors' luncheons, she was inevitably asked about her fees. "The pastors look shocked when I tell them," she said, asking how to handle the reaction. Other seminars offered "how to determine a fair price for selling or buying a psychotherapy practice," business and marketing principles to help with the "bottom line", and the selling of Christian-oriented services to the insurance community."

A workshop on publishing attracted much interest from eager would-be authors.

Psychologists sell a product, they do not take offerings or live on grants. Energetic businesses like Minirth–Meier and Rapha market their wares synergistically using clinics, seminars, books, videos, radio shows, and 800 telephone numbers. That is not wrong, but it does raise questions about profit becoming more important than principle.

"The alternative [to charging fees],” psychologist Henry Cloud says, “would be the church collecting funds, opening a counseling center, and treating people for free. I think that in a majority of cases in suburban America, people can pay for it themselves. There is no such thing as free

treatment. Somebody has to pay for it. I came to think that it would be better for the individual who *can* pay to pay for his own care, because then he is responsible, and his treatment doesn't take way from the whole church. The question then becomes, what do those who are gifted and trained do for those who can't pay? I know how I've worked that out. I treat them. I treat them because I have an income.

“There is a tendency among Christian therapists to say, ‘God’s number one commitment is to help us get over our problems.’ “

—Larry Crab

Not every therapist is so altruistic, however. The question of how to deal with people who cannot afford treatment bedevils the entire medical establishment, but it is particularly crucial for a movement that claims to be Christian.

In purely cynical terms, Christian psychotherapy can be seen as a marketing ploy, gilding psychology with just enough Christianity to make conservative clients feel comfortable. One hears persistent rumors that some clinics are doing just that: selling themselves as Christian when, from an evangelical point of view, they are not. It is a disturbing eddy—and probably and inevitable part of an operation that is so successful and attracts a lot of money.

7. Does psychology’s fascination with the interior life sap commitment from mission?

In *We’ve Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and the World’s Getting Worse*, journalist Michael Ventura assails psychotherapy’s tacit assumption that all life’s problems should be processed internally and individually.

“There’s a lot of schlocky stuff being passed off as Christian counseling by a lot of schlocky people. “

—Charles Swindoll

“A therapist told me that my grief at seeing a homeless man my age was really a feeling of sorrow for myself,” he writes. By implication, the therapist was telling him to reflect on himself rather than to work for the homeless.

Turn that thought toward the church and you have to wonder whether a psychologized church will ever get on to mission. Psychotherapy’s promise is that psychologically healthy people will be more productive, but there is also a possibility that a church that is healthier according to psychological criteria could be simply a more introspective, self-satisfied church. How much of Christ’s work has been done by psychologically whole people?

Psychology's good works

You can ask a lot of penetrating questions of psychotherapy. You should not, however, miss something equally important: the urgent questions psychotherapy brings to the church. "I think the critics need to ask, 'Why are people so interested in psychology?'" says psychologist Bruce Narramore. "The thought is that we ought to go back to the old way. But the old way wasn't working. The church wasn't stemming the tide. What was missing in the church was a practical application of our biblical knowledge to life."

David Powlison remembers reading through a massive theological classic on sin and realizing that the multivolume work contained not a single case study showing how sin works in ordinary life. The theological exposition was brilliant, but there was no detail. "Psychology is persuasive existentially because it is case-wise, empirically detailed, and practiced in talking about and facilitating change processes." He argues that the church has been relegated to the "superficial and external" (calling people to moral uprightness and to assent to a few doctrinal essentials) and to the "mystical and intangible." "Psychology has staked out everything in the middle. . . the intricacies of motivation, defensiveness, interpersonal conflict, communication, problem solving, anger, anxiety, depression, guilty, the grieving process, parenting, sexuality, addictions."

The need for help with such issues is inescapable. We have larger, less personal churches; dislocated communities and families; and social problems at flood tide. The people with the worst problems are frequently those whose families and friends cannot help. Personal problems are not simple anymore (if they ever were); there is a confusing brew of family, societal, drug-related, and religious issues to sort through. Christians psychotherapists promise to offer help, and they have won at least tentative approval from church people. Now the people who have been helped – many of them pastors – are bringing psychology's insights into the church.

The universality of problems. The psychologists' most fundamental perspective is that people have problems – even good, Bible-believing, Spirit-filled people have problems. That insight has changed the culture of many churches. Where once problems were a badge of shame, they are now almost a badge of honor. In a LEADERSHIP journal interview, pastor Bill Hybels says, "If someone says, 'Actually, my family was just about perfect. There were no problems. . . ' we know there's cause for concern."

Helplessness. "There is an implication in all of [our critics'] writings that people are able to choose what is right," says Henry Cloud. "There is a total denial of the fact we are sold into slavery." Psychotherapists consistently indict the evangelical church for failing to grasp people's helplessness. They suggest evangelicals – especially those from a fundamentalist background – have deified willpower, as though a sinking person can pull himself up by his own bootstraps. The church has often offered condemnation and pep talks, when the desperate person needs acceptance and patient understanding if she's ever going to improve.

Heart changes. Larry Crabb says that Christian psychotherapy is a "response to a shallow sort of spirituality that developed out of fundamentalism in its controversy with the modernists."

Fundamentalists properly emphasized moral and revelational absolutes, he says, but “sanctification came to be seen as no more than chosen obedience.” Christian psychotherapists emphasize change that works from the inside out. They note that Christ’s command is to love God and our neighbor from the *heart*. Somehow, love has to reach the deepest level of our emotions and desires; telling people to try harder or pray more doesn’t accomplish that. It was the Pharisees, therapists point out, who lived an outwardly flawless life but were rotten inside.

The body of Christ Therapists emphasize intimate relationships with other believers. Historically, the evangelical church for the most part has told people to work out their problems with God alone, to pray and obey. Therapists believe that that often merely sanctifies denial; God becomes a supreme way to avoid facing your problems. Therapists say people need encounters with other Christians who will “speak the truth in love”; the entire church can be therapeutic, particularly through small groups that are completely accepting and encourage honest relationships. “The quality of my relationships is a real measure of the quality of sanctification going on in my life.” says Larry Crabb.

Appendix 14 — The Components of Education

Compiled by Purnachandra dasa

The levels or components of education are described in the *Brhad Aranyaka Upanisada* (2.4.5), Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras* (1.17) and a Sankrit Poem called the *Naisadha Caritam* (1.4). These three *sastras* list the basis components of learning in slightly different ways, but we shall see that they all agree on the first three major levels.

The *Brhad Aranyaka Upanisada* offers three broad categories of learning: *sravana*, *manana* and *nidhidhyasana*. *Sravana* means hearing from a teacher. *Manana* means gaining intellectual insight or understanding by reflecting upon the subject. *Nidhidhyasana* means realization and application in life.

The *Yoga Sutras* present four levels: *vitarka*, *vicara*, *ananda* and *asmitarupa*. *Vitarka* consists of study, analysis, conjecture and argument. *Vicara* includes reflection, meditation, insight and understanding. *Ananda* contains assimilation and application. *Asmitarupa* is equivalent to *Svarupa-sidhhi*, the perfection of the *astanga-yoga* practice.

The *Naisadha Caritam* also mentions four levels: *adhiti*, *bodha*, *acarana*, and *pracarana*. *Adhiti* means to learn the subject thoroughly. *Bodha* entails gaining insight and proficiency in one’s learning. *Acarana* involve realizing the purpose of our learning and living according to it. *Pracarana* comprises giving this knowledge to others.

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The *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* and the *Ādhunika-vāda*

by

Shukavak Das

Thakur Bhaktivinode begins his *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā*¹ with an *Upakramaṇikā*, or Introduction, in Bengali. Following the *Upakramaṇikā* is the main body of the work written in Sanskrit called the *Saṁhitā*.² Finally, there is an *Upasaṁhāra* or Conclusion

¹The *Śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* is a theological work written in Sanskrit and Bengali by Kedarnath Dutta Bhaktivinode (1838–1914). The work was first published in 1879 and then again in 1901. The *Śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* was meant to theologically interpret the character and activities of Śrī Krishna to the Western educated intelligencia of Bengal, the *bhadrāloka*, in the light of criticism from Christian missionaries and other European concerns.

²The *Saṁhitā* is a collection of 281 Sanskrit verses arranged into ten chapters with Bengali commentary. Chapter one describes the ultimate relationship between the soul and God and includes a brief description of heaven (*Vaikuṇṭha*). Chapter two describes the energies of God (Nārāyaṇa) in terms of the ontological construction of *Vaikuṇṭha* and its relationship to this physical world. Chapter three describes the *avatāras* of Sri Hari in relation to the evolutionary development of *jīva* in the material world. Chapters four, five and six summarize the main pastimes of Sri Krishna. Chapter seven explains the relationship between human language and man's ability to comprehend and communicate Krishna *līlā*. Chapter eight discusses the metaphoric dimension of Krishna *līlā* by interpreting the various *asuras* in Krishna's life at Braj as obstacles on the spiritual path. Chapter nine outlines the meditative process of *sahaja-samādhi* or mystic intuition, and shows how it can be employed to perceive higher spiritual reality. Finally, chapter ten depicts the character and activities of an *uttamādhikārī*, or one who has obtained spiritual maturity.

The importance of the *Saṁhitā* lies in its systematic and ontological presentation of

written in Bengali.³ The *Upakramaṇikā* is of particular interest because it was specifically written according to what Bhaktivinode calls the *ādhunika-vāda* or the “modern approach”. Here are some details of the *ādhunika-vāda* taken from the *Upakramaṇikā*.

The *Upakramaṇikā* first establishes the date of many important events of Indian history, for example, the coming of the Aryans into Brahmavarta (India), their progressive migration from north to south, and the date of the *Mahābhārata* war – all presented according to the methodology of what was then (19th century) modern scholarship. It divides history into eight periods spanning 6341 years starting with the rule of the *Prājāpatyas* and coming to an end first with Muslim rule and finally with British rule commencing in 1757. (See Table one.) It then divides Hindu textual traditions into eight literary periods corresponding to the eight historical periods. (See Table two.)

The *Upakramaṇikā* categorizes Vedic history according to eight phases of development as follows:

Table One – Vedic History

Krishna *līlā* to the rational mind of the *bhadralok*. In this section Bhaktivinode plays the role of theologian by providing the *bhadralok* with the means to appreciate and accept the Puranic Krishna that many of them had rejected as licentious and immoral.

³The *Upasamhāra*, or the summary portion of the *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā*, written in Bengali prose, provides a systematic explanation of Caitanya's philosophy arranged according to three topics, *sambandha*, *prayojana* and *abhidheya*. *Sambandha* discusses the relationship between God, the soul and matter. *Prayojana* describes the goal of life, Krishna *prema* (love), and *abhidheya* outlines the means by which that goal may be attained.

Period Name		Period Rulers	Period in Years	Beginning Date
1.	Prājāpatyas	Rule by the sages	50	4463 BC
2.	Mānavas	Rule by Svāyambhu-manu and his dynasty	50	4413 BC
3.	Daivas	Rule by Aindras	100	4363 BC
4.	Vaivasvatya	Rule by the Dynasty of Vaivasvana	3465	4263 BC
5.	Antyajās	Rule by the Ābhīras, Śakas, Yavanas, Khasasm, Andhras, etc.	1233	798 BC
6.	Brātyas	Rule by the New Aryan Castes	771	435 AD
7.	Muslims	Rule by Pāthāns and Mughuls	551	1206 AD
8.	British	British Rule	121	1757 AD
			— — Total 6341	

In preparing this Table, Bhaktivinode cites the work of Archdeacon Pratt, Major Wilford, Professor Playfair, and Mr. Davis – all British military officers or civil administrative officials who undertook historical research in India just prior to the time of Bhaktivinode.⁴

In a similar manner he divides India’s philosophic development into eight periods as follows:

Table Two – Philosophical History

⁴For a summary of various presentations of Indian historiography created during the nineteenth century see: M. Krishnamachariar, *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974), Introduction.

	Śāstra Name	Patrons
1.	Pranava (Om) Sāṅketika Śruti	Prājāpatyas
2.	Sampūrṇa Śrutis Gayatri hymn, etc.	Mānavas, Daivas and some families of Vaivasvata
3.	Sautra Śrutis	First Half of Vaivasvata's Dynasty
4.	Manu Smṛti, etc.	Second Half of Vaivasvata's Dynasty
5.	Itihāsa	Second Half of Vaivasvata's Dynasty
6.	Philosophic Texts	Antyajās
7.	Purāṇas and Sātvata Tantras	Brātyas
8.	Tantras	Muslims

In this way the *Upakramaṇikā* outlines the historical development of the four Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Purāṇas*, along with the development of Buddhism and the six traditional Hindu philosophies.

The most important feature of Bhaktivinode's view of history is not his particular categorization of Vedic history into eight time periods or even the particular dating scheme that he suggests. Instead it is the very fact that his view of history reflects a linear and progressive understanding of time. Bhaktivinode's perspective of history as linear and progressive is characteristic of nineteenth century modernity. During the nineteenth century the influence of Darwin and Comte greatly supported the notion of history as an evolutionary process.⁵ This perspective is reflected throughout Bhaktivinode's work. The idea that history is progressive – that it leads to higher and higher levels of cultural and spiritual development – is indicative of the “degree of modernity” in Bhaktivinode's work. Even regarding the ten *avatāras* of Hari, he does so in a way that illustrates his evolutionary and progressive view of history, typical of

⁵For background discussion see Robert N. Bellah, “Religious Evolution,” *Reader in Comparative Religion, An Anthropological Approach*, 2d ed. eds., William A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 73.

nineteenth century historiography. I quote from his *Samhitā*:

Text

5. To whatever condition of life the *jīva* goes, Lord Hari manifests Himself through His inconceivable energy and plays with him in that way.
6. Lord Hari assumes the form of Matysa among fish, the form of Kūrma among turtles, and the form of Varāha among *jīvas* who possess a spine.

Elaboration

When the *jīva* takes the form of a fish, Bhagavān becomes the Matysa *avatāra*. A fish is spineless, but when the spineless state gradually becomes the hard shell state, the Kūrma *avatāra* appears. When the hard-shell state gradually becomes a spine, the Boar (Varāha) incarnation appears.

Text

7. Midway (between man and animal) Nṛsimha appears. Among dwarfs Vāmana appears. Among uncivilized tribes Bhārgava (Paraśurāma) appears. Among the civilized tribes the son of Daśaratha (Rāma) appears.
8. When man attains full consciousness (*sarva-vijñāna*), Bhagavān Krishna Himself appears. When there is faith in logic, the Buddha incarnation appears, and when atheism prevails Kalki appears.
9. According to the advancement in the heart of the *jīva*, the *avatāras* of Hari appear. Their appearance in this world is never dependent on birth and action.
10. Analyzing the successive characteristics of the *jīva*, time in the *śāstras* has been divided by the ṛṣis into ten stages.⁶

Here the *Samhitā* describes how each incarnation of Hari successively assumes a different form so as to match the physical evolutionary development of the embodied soul (*jīvātmā*) from its most primitive invertebrate state to its highest vertebrate and

⁶Bhaktivinode Thakur, *Kṛṣṇa-samhitā*, ed Bhaktivilas Tirtha (Mayapur: Shree Chaitanya Math, 474 Gaurābda (1969)), *Samhitā*, 3/5-10. This work is abbreviated as KS from here on. All translations are my own.

intelligent state. Not only do these passages reflect the evolutionary theories of Darwin, they also reflect the understanding that the passage of history is synonymous with progress.⁷

In another example that demonstrates Bhaktivinode's belief in progressive historical development, he analyses history in terms of *rasa* or spiritual mood. He describes how there are five primary *rasas* (*śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, and *mādhurya*) and how the various stages of Indian history exhibit each of these *rasas*.⁸ He suggests that the dawn of Vedic civilization embodied the development of the *śānta-rasa*, the peaceful mood. Later on, in successive ages, higher and higher stages of *rasika* development occurred. For example, the age of the Rāmāyaṇa exhibits the *dāsyā-rasa* (servitude) in the personality of Hanumān. Later on Uddhava and Arjuna manifest the *sakhya-rasa*, the friendly mood, and so on. Surprisingly, he also describes how the various non-Vedic religions embody different expressions of *rasa*. For example, Mohammed and Moses express the *dāsyā-rasa*, servitude, while Jesus embodies the *vātsalya-rasa*, the parental mood. Finally, with the advent of Caitanya came the manifestation of the *mādhurya-rasa*, the quintessential amorous *rasika* mood. He compares the development of *rasa* in the world to the sun which first rises in the East and then follows its course to the West. So the flood of *rasa* first rises in the East and then flows to the West. He notes that the *mādhurya-rasa* has only just started to flow to the West and has been developed to a certain extent by an English scholar named Newman.⁹

In this way Bhaktivinode holds an evolutionary view of history that is characteristic of nineteenth century modernity. It is also significant that, although Bhaktivinode shows a great respect and reverence for the ancient Vedic culture of India, he never suggests a return to Vedic ways. He views Vedic culture as the foundation of Hindu culture but not something that India or the *bhadralok* should necessarily return to. Life is dynamic and progressive and just as the *śānta-rasa* formed the foundations of

⁷Ramakanta Chakrabarty even goes so far as to claim that Bhaktivinode was a Darwinian. See *Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal* (Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1985), 397.

⁸KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, 75.

⁹*Ibid.*, 76. There were two Newmans who were popular with the *bhadralok* during this time period. They were Francis W. Newman (1805–1897) who was an English Unitarian, and his older brother, John Henry Newman (1801–1890), who was a British theologian. John Henry began his career as an Anglican, but later converted to Roman Catholicism. It is not clear to which Newman Bhaktivinode is referring.

Vedic culture, so successive stages of spiritual and cultural development have occurred since that time. Today something higher, *mādhurya-rasa*, has arisen, so it would be foolish to think that we should return to *śānta-rasa*. The idea of Vedic culture is important in Bhaktivinode's thinking, indeed it is foundational, but it is not an absolute paradigm for modern emulation. Instead, he offers a view of history that he calls the *ādhunika-vāda*.

The *ādhunika-vāda* was Bhaktivinode's attempt to approach the study of Vedic history and geography from the perspective of the modern historian. Specifically, he wanted to use the tools of modern comparative scholarship to show the antiquity of Vedic thought and thereby draw attention to the spiritual significance of Sri Krishna and Vaishnava culture. The *ādhunika-vāda* was based on the premise that the existing religious traditions within Bengal had neglected the needs of the modern intellectual. Bhaktivinode identified three types of spiritual seekers (*adhikārīs*): *komala-śraddhas*, *madhyamādhikārīs*, and *uttamādhikārīs*.¹⁰ Such a classification of spiritual seekers was based on their ability to comprehend spiritual truth.

Komala-śraddhas are persons on the first stage of spiritual growth. The expression, *komala-śraddhas*, literally means persons of "tender faith". *Komala-śraddhas* comprise the majority of persons within any religious community – common believers, if you will, who are described as having limited power of independent thought.¹¹ The most characteristic feature of *komala-śraddhas* is that they are generally unable to see beyond their own subjective and parochial religious perspective. Next to *komala-śraddhas* are *madhyamādhikārīs*, or persons of middle faith. *Madhyamādhikārīs* are also known as *yukty-adhikārīs*, or persons capable of independent reasoning. Perhaps the most characteristic feature of *madhyamādhikārīs* is that they are often plagued by profound religious doubt. Skepticism is the hallmark of *madhyamādhikārīs*. Practically, we can surmise that *madhyamādhikārīs* are the intellectuals of society, who in Bhaktivinode's time included many of the *bhadralok*. Above them are the *uttamādhikārīs*, or the enlightened *sāragrāhīs*. Such persons are naturally the rarest of

¹⁰A more standard use of these three terms comes from the *Bhāgavata*, where they apply to three grades of *bhaktas*. (B. P. 11.2.45-47) In the *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* however, Bhaktivinode uses these terms in a slightly different way applying them to people in general and not exclusively to *bhaktas*.

¹¹KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, 3: *yāhādera svādhīna vicāra-śaktir udaya haya nāi, tāñhārā komala-śraddha nāme prathama-bhāge avasthāna karena/ viśvāsa vyatīta tāñhādera gati nāi/*

all.¹² Bhaktivinode's classification of spiritual seekers is analogous to Paul Tillich's categorization of three types of believers: primitive believers, doubting believers, and enlightenedbelievers.¹³

Komala-śraddhas and *madhyamādhikārīs* differ widely in their ability to understand spiritual truths and consequently in the way they must be approached for spiritual elevation. Bhaktivinode writes:

Men have acquired different rights according to their knowledge and tendencies. Only one who understands the purely spiritual experience [of God], is able to worship a spiritual form. To the extent that one is below this stage, one has to understand [God] accordingly. One at a very low stage cannot realize a higher spiritual aspect [of God].¹⁴

In other words, each person approaches God according to his or her own capabilities. According to Bhaktivinode, there are three basic levels of approach corresponding to the three *adhikārīs* or religious candidates.

Unfortunately, pre-nineteenth century Hindu religious commentators had addressed the needs of *komala-śraddhas* more than those of *madhyamādhikārīs*.¹⁵ Bhaktivinode points out how the traditional forms of religious exegesis, the *ṭīkā*s and *ṭippaṇīs* (commentaries), had failed to address the concerns of the *bhadrāloka* and how his *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* was therefore an attempt to fulfill that need. The problem, however, was not only the lack of sophisticated religious texts or commentaries available to the

¹²Ibid., 3: *viśvasta viśaye yukty-yoga karite samartha haiyāo yāñhārā pāram-gata nā haiyāchena tāñhārā yukty-adhikārī vā madhyamādhikārī baliyā parigaṇita hana/ pāram-gata puruṣerā sarvārtha-siddha/ tāñhārā artha-sakala-dvārā svādhīna-ceṣṭākrame paramārtha-sādhane sakṣama/ ihādera nāma uttamādhikārī/*

¹³D. Mackenzie Brown, *Ultimate Concern, Tillich in Dialogue* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 191.

¹⁴Thakur Bhaktivinode, *Jaiva Dharma* (Mayapur: Caitanya Math, 1972), 197-8. Abbreviated as JD from here on.: *mānava-sakala jñāna o saṁskārera tāratamyakrame adhikāra-bheda lābha kariyā thāke/ yini śuddha-cinmayabhāva bujhiyāchena, tinī kevala cinmaya-vigraha-upāsānāya samartha/se viśaye yāñhārā yatadūra nimne āchena, tāñhārā tatadūra mātrai bujhite pārena/ atyanta nimnādhikārīra cinmaya bhāvera upalabdhī haya nā/*

¹⁵KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, 4: *ṭīkā ṭippaṇī-kārera anekei sārāgrāhī chilena, kintu tāñhārā yatadūra komala-śraddhadigera prati dayā prakāśa kariyāchena tatadūra madhyamādhikārīdigera prati karena nāi*

bhadralok. It was that the *bhadralok* had only limited access to the intellectual side of their Hindu tradition, which was largely preserved in Sanskrit. Consequently, they were apt to reject the popular religious tradition as superstitious or irrelevant.

In fact most Hindu texts were meant to be read with elaborate commentaries and living gurus to interpret the texts in more sophisticated ways, but in the absence of such textual and human aids, the *bhadralok* were inclined to reject their traditions outright. The problem was further exacerbated by traditional commentaries that did not deal with modern critical issues. It was, therefore, the task of a few individuals like Bhaktivinode to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity and create a relevant link between the past and the present.

In his *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* Bhaktivinode suggests that texts like the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Purāṇas* present spiritual teachings to *komala-śraddhas* through entertaining and superhuman stories, fantastic time calculations, and awesome descriptions of heavens and hells in order to inspire faith and regulate the activities of *komala-śraddhas* for their ultimate progress.¹⁶ He points out that the *Bhāgavata* calls this *parokṣa-vāda* or the presentation of spiritual teachings through indirect means.¹⁷ *Parokṣa-vāda* often involves the placing of spiritual truths within historical or fictional narratives with the threat of punishment for failure or the promise of reward for compliant activities. In the *Tattva-sūtra* (1893), Bhaktivinode describes this as follows:¹⁸

Due to their instinctual nature, common people engage in worldly enjoyments. Since their nature is generally inclined towards the gratification of their senses, the scriptures try to reform them through many types of tricks such as coercion or sly means. Often the scriptures threaten the ignorant with the punishment of hell, or with the

¹⁶Thakur Bhaktivinode, *The Bhagavata, Its Philosophy, Ethics, and Theology* (Madras: Madras Gaudiya Math, 1959), 28. Abbreviated as *The Bhagavata* from here on. KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, 16; TS., 199.

¹⁷*Bhāg.*, vs. 11/3/44: *parokṣa-vādo vedo 'yaṁ bālānām anuśāsanam/ karma-mokṣāya karmāṇi viddhatte hy agadam yathā*

¹⁸Bhaktivinode's idea of *parokṣa-vāda* as described above was not just an idea that he expressed in his earlier works like the *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* or *The Bhagavata, Its Philosophy, Ethics and Theology*, but it is a theme that exists throughout his works. This quotation from the *Tattva-sūtra* shows that he held this idea even in his later writings.

temptations of heaven. At other times they are purified by engagements suited to their nature.¹⁹

According to Bhaktivinode, the popular approach of orthodox Hinduism, what most of the *bhadralok* grew up hearing, was the approach of Vedic culture presented for the benefit of *komala-śraddhas*. It is a kind of religious literalism that involved only the most basic narrative level of *śāstric* interpretation. In most cases literal interpretations of this type do not appeal to the logical and rational minds of *madhyamādhikārīs*. In fact, they are intellectually and spiritually alienated by such an approach. As a result, the Bengali *madhyamādhikārīs* (the typical *bhadralok*), when faced with rational alternatives, rejected their ancestral traditions and followed foreign philosophies or created their own rational systems of thought.²⁰ According to Bhaktivinode, however, the *bhadralok* need not restrict themselves to the perspective of *komala-śraddhas*, but have the right and the obligation to examine their religious traditions from their own perspective. Spiritual truth is eternal, but how it is understood varies according to the capacity and the perspective of the individual.²¹

An approach suited to the *komala-śraddhas* is often inappropriate for *madhyamādhikārīs*. In a similar manner, a perspective tailored to the intellectual needs of *madhyamādhikārīs* is inappropriate for *komala-śraddhas*. The *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* and the *Tattva-sūtra*, to cite two examples, were not written for *komala-śraddhas*. *Śāstra* can and should be presented in various ways to suit the intellectual and spiritual qualifications of a diverse audience, including all categories of *adhikārīs*. But Bhaktivinode warns that it is not always appropriate for *komala-śraddhas* to hear what is written for *madhyamādhikārīs* as it may confuse and damage their tender faith,²² as much as

¹⁹*Sajana-toṣaṇī*, edited by Radhika Prasad (Calcutta: Vaishnava Depository, from 1881), vol. 8 (1896), 150. Abbreviated as ST from here on. *Tattva-sūtra: kintu svabhāva vaśata yāhāte pravṛtti haya tāhāi kare/ tāñhādera svabhāva prāyāi indriya-poṣaka, ejanya śāstra nānāvidha chala, bala o kauśalera dvārā tāhādera maṅgala vidhāna karite yatna pāna/kakhanao narakera bhaya pradārśana karena, kakhanao vā svargera sukha-bhogera pralobhana dekhāna/ kakhanao vā pravṛtti anusāre kāryera dvārā saṁskāra karena/*

²⁰KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, 4.

²¹KS, *Samhitā*, 7.2: *jīve sambandhikī seyam deśa-kāla-vicārata/ pravarttate dvidhā sāpi pātra-bhedakramād iha/*

²²KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, 56: *komala-śraddha mahodaya-gaṇa āmādera vākya-tātparya nā buddhiyā evam vidha śāstrake ādhunika baliyā hata-śraddha haite pārena, ataeva ei vicāra tāñhādera pakṣe pāṭhya*

madhyamādhikārīs feel alienated when subjected to the literal perspective of *komala-śraddhas*.²³

In presenting his work, Bhaktivinode states that the whole point of his presentation is to show the antiquity of the Vedic tradition and the development of Vaishnava culture within that tradition. He writes:

Just when this pure Vaishnava dharma arose and how it developed in our country has to be determined, but before we discuss this we must discuss many other topics. Therefore, we will begin with the dates of the most important historical events of Indian history according to modern opinion. Then we will determine the dates of the many respected books. As we fix the date of these texts we will determine the history of Vaishnava dharma. Whatever seems clear according to modern opinion we will discuss. We examine time according to the ancient method, but for the benefit of people today we will rely upon the modern conventions.²⁴

In other words, Bhaktivinode is saying: My fellow *bhadralok*, your minds are trained to accept the conclusions of rational analysis fashioned with the tools of modern scholarship, so we shall employ these tools to examine our religious traditions. Let us apply the techniques of modern textual criticism and historiography to the geographic and historical information of the *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas* to achieve a renewed understanding of our Hindu traditions. This was the *ādhunika-vāda*.

His use of the *ādhunika-vāda* was a means to appeal to the Western educated *bhadralok*. In doing so he was attempting to give them the confidence to follow their ancestral religious traditions by showing how those traditions could plausibly be

naya/

²³Ibid., 4.

²⁴Ibid., 11: *ei śuddha vaiṣṇava-dharma asmaddēṣe kona samaye udita haya o kona kona samaye unnata haiyā prakāśita haiyāche tāhā vicāra karā karttavya/ ei viśaya vicāra karivāra pūrve anyānya aneka viśaya sthira karā āvaśyaka/ ataeva āmarā prathame bhārata-bhūmira pradhāna pradhāna pūrva ghaṭanāra kāla ādhunika vicāra-mate nirūpaṇa kariyā pare sammānita grantha-sakalera e prakāra kāla sthira kariba/ grantha-sakalera kāla nirūpita hailei tanmadhye vaiṣṇava-dharmera itihāsa, yāhā ādhunika-mate spaṣṭa haibe, tāhā prakāśa kariba/ āmarā prācīna paddhati-krame kālera vicāra kariyā thāki, kintu ekhanakāra lokadera upakārārthe ādhunika paddhati avalambana kariba/*

redefined and re-appropriated according to the culture of the modern world.

By employing the approach of the *ādhunika-vāda*, Bhaktivinode extends himself beyond the subjective position of the traditional theologian and places himself in a position to peer back at his tradition through the eyes of the critical observer. This is the role of what Bhaktivinode calls the true critic. He describes the true critic as one who

should be of the same disposition of mind as that of the author, whose merit he is required to judge. Thoughts have different ways. One who is trained up in the thoughts of the Unitarian Society or of the Vedant [sic] of the Benares School, will scarcely find piety in the faith of the Vaishnavs. [sic] An ignorant Vaishnav, on the other hand... will find no piety in the Christian. This is because, the Vaishnav does not think in the way in which the Christian thinks of his own religion. ... In a similar manner the Christian needs to adopt the way of thought which the Vedantist pursued, before he can love the conclusions of the philosopher. The critic, therefore, should have a comprehensive, good, generous, candid, impartial, and sympathetic soul.²⁵

The religious perspective that Bhaktivinode describes here is thus able to encompass both the perspective of the religious believer as well as that of the critical observer. This is the perspective of the *sāragrāhī*, or essence seeker.

Paul Tillich proffers a model of theology – which he calls the theological circle – that well illustrates Bhaktivinode’s approach towards modernity and tradition. If we imagine a circle that delineates a theological belief system, the area within the circle is the perspective of the religious insider and the area outside is the perspective of the religious outsider. Tillich suggests that it is the unique ability of the modern theologian to move both within and outside of the theological circle. In the contemporary global and pluralistic context, the theologian must have the ability to step beyond the subjective theological perspective and critically examine that perspective from a position shared with the religious outsider.

Bhaktivinode’s *ādhunika-vāda* entails this ability. In assuming the position of the *ādhunika-vāda* he had to step, at least temporarily, beyond his own position – in this case the traditional perspective of the Caitanya theologian – and into the world of the

²⁵Thakur, *The Bhagavata*, 8 and 11.

outsider (to the Caitanya Vaishnava tradition). The ability to step beyond one's own theological and philosophic perspective and appreciate the views of others without losing one's faith is what Bhaktivinode calls the perspective of the *sāragrāhī*, or one who grasps the essence (of religious faith). He describes this as follows:

Subjects of philosophy and theology are like the peaks of large towering and inaccessible mountains standing in the midst of our planet inviting attention and investigation. Thinkers and men of deep speculation take their observations through the instruments of reason and consciousness. But they take different points when they carry on their work. These points are positions chalked out by the circumstances of their social and philosophical life, different as they are in the different parts of the world...but the conclusion is all the same in as much as the object of observation was one and the same. They all hunted after the Great Spirit, the unconditioned Soul of the universe.²⁶

Similarly Bhaktivinode explains that the *sāragrāhī* is not attached to a particular theory or religious doctrine.²⁷ Even when an opposing opinion is offered, if it is

²⁶Thakur, *The Bhagavata*, 9 - 10.

²⁷In his *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* Bhaktivinode points out that the religious sect (*sampradāya*) is characterized by three differentiating traits: physical (*ālocaka*), cultic (*ālocanā*), and doctrinal (*ālocya*). Physical traits refers to the external cultural differences that exist between the various religions such as type and color of dress, sectarian marks (*tilaka*), the wearing of sacred articles, and so on. Cultic traits refers to differences of worship, which include the honor of different rivers and places of geography, fasting times, dietary restrictions, and so on. Doctrinal traits are differences based on interpretation of sacred texts which conclude that God is immanent or transcendent, male or female, and so on. In this way the various religions of the world are characterized by their diverse cultural, geographic, and philosophic differences. Finally he concludes:

On account of place, time, language, customs, food, dress, and nature all these differences arise. The characteristics of birth combined with the characteristics of religion gradually create a situation where one group becomes distinguished from another group and eventually they no longer understand that they are all born of mankind. (KS *Upakramaṇikā* 7.)

He points out that such differences are external and do not constitute the essence of religious understanding. It is only the *sāragrāhīs* who are able to see beyond these externals. In this way

presented according to sound reasoning, it can be worthy of respect and consideration.²⁸ *Sāragrāhīs* are, therefore, able to perceive the essential truth that exists in other religious perspectives because they are not limited to just their own formulation of their internal and subjective religious perspective. The irenic perspective of the *sāragrāhī* relates well to the religious pluralism and cosmopolitanism characteristic of modernity.

In a similar manner the historical perspective that Bhaktivinode adopts in his *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* is in the spirit of the *sāragrāhī*. This was Bhaktivinode's rationale for sending his *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* to America and Europe at such an early time. He was reaching out to fellow *sāragrāhīs*.

The fruits of this endeavor were impressive. Not only was Bhaktivinode able to reformulate the Caitanya-sampradāya in terms of modernity, but he also initiated religious communication with members of the international community. In his *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* he expresses a profound sense of collegiality with his fellow truth-seekers throughout the world. He writes:

Those who are endowed with spiritual vision can recognize them [foreign *sāragrāhīs*] as fellow *yogīs*. *Komala-śraddhas* (neophytes) and those who are inexperienced think of them as worldly or sometimes even against God. But the *sāragrāhīs*, whether of their own country or foreign are easily able to recognize their fellow spiritualists who are endowed with all good qualities. Even though their customs, symbols, worship, language, and dress are different, they are mutual brothers and are able to easily address one another as “brother”.²⁹

We know, of course, from Bhaktivinode’s autobiography that some of the foreign

only the *sāragrāhī* are able to move both within and outside of the theological circle.

²⁸KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, 61: *sāragrāhī janagaṇa vāda-niṣṭha nahena, ataeva sad-yukti dvārā ihāra viparīta kona viṣaya sthira haileo tāhā āmādera ādaraṇīya/*

²⁹KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, 79-80: *ye sakala lokera divya-cakṣu āche tāñhārā tāñhādigake sāmānya-yogī baliyā jānena/ yāñhārā anabhijñā vā komala-śraddha, tāñhārā tāñhādigake saṁsārāsakta baliyā bodha karena/ kakhana kakhana bhagavad-vimukha baliyāo sthira karite pārena/ sāragrāhī janagaṇa svadeśīya videśīya sarva-lakṣaṇa-sampanna sāragrāhī bhrātāke anāyāse jānite pārena/ tāñhādera paricchada, bhāṣā, upāsanā, liṅga o vyavahāra-sakala bhinna bhinna haileo tāñhārā paraspara bhrātā baliyā anāyāse sambodhana karite pārena/*

sāragrāhīs that he was referring to were Ralph Waldo Emerson in America and Reinhold Rost in Europe.

Theologically speaking, the ability to step beyond one's subjective position is a requirement of modern theological scholarship. The globalization that Bhaktivinode faced in the melting pot of Calcutta – and that religious traditions still face today – demanded self-criticism and comparative scholarship. What we need to understand, however, is how, theologically, Bhaktivinode was able to operate on both sides of the theological circle without loss to his religious faith. As we shall see, it is not so easy to be effective within both worlds.

Two Modes of Religious Understanding

Bhaktivinode's *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* was indeed a radical departure from the orthodox understanding of Vedic history, although by today's standards his Indian historiography is badly out of date. The very fact that he employs the *ādhunika-vāda* is a major innovation for the Caitanya religious tradition. We must, therefore, try to understand Bhaktivinode's theological justification for employing modern methods of critical analysis. It is not difficult to understand how the British Orientalists, who were outsiders to Hindu tradition, could employ the tools of modern analysis to the Vedic traditions, but it is remarkable to find Bhaktivinode, a Vaishnava insider, employing those same techniques. We might expect that an historical study of the life of Krishna using modern methodology would diminish or even deny the divine aspects of Krishna's existence. So the question then arises: How could Bhaktivinode justify the use of the *ādhunika-vāda* and at the same time maintain his faith in the spiritual integrity of the Vaishnava tradition?

Let me give an example that shows how the problem was not just a concern for the nineteenth century, but is still a very real challenge for Caitanya Vaishnavism today and, in more general terms, may also be a problem for much of the religious world at large. I once presented a paper, which summarized Bhaktivinode's analysis of Vedic history from his *Upakramaṇikā*, to an audience made up exclusively of followers of the Caitanya Vaishnava tradition. During my presentation, I stated Bhaktivinode's view that the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* might not be a work compiled by *the* Vedavyāsa 5000 years ago, as orthodox Vaishnava tradition teaches, but in fact may be a work that is not older than a 1000 years, compiled by a southerner writing in the name of Vedavyāsa. Bhaktivinode had reached this conclusion by analyzing certain geographic and

cultural aspects of the *Bhāgavata*.³⁰ In other words, he was voicing an opinion arrived at through the use of the techniques of the *ādhunikā-vāda*.

A suggestion such as this coming from a secular scholar steeped in Western criticism would not be unusual and could be easily deflected by my audience, but coming from Bhaktivinode, an *ācārya* from within the tradition, cast a spell of disbelief over my audience. All sorts of doubts were raised: Perhaps Bhaktivinode did not actually believe these things but was only using these ideas as a “preaching tactic” in order to attract the *bhadralok*, or perhaps he wrote his work when he was young and still learning but later came to reject these views, or perhaps my understanding of his perspective was incorrect.

Afterwards I was approached by one respected participant who was greatly disturbed and perplexed. He mentioned that he was upset by the mere suggestion that Bhaktivinode may have said that the *Bhāgavata* was only 1000 years old or that it was not written by *the* Vedavyāsa. This individual even questioned how I could make such a presentation. In fact, I was being accused of disturbing the spiritual peace.

Reflecting on this, I realized that this individual was upset because I had challenged one of his most sacred beliefs, namely, the spiritual authority of the *Bhāgavata*, from which much of the Caitanya tradition derives its authority. And what is more important, by questioning his beliefs concerning certain historical details about the *Bhāgavata*, I had challenged his basic faith in the tradition as a whole. This is the perspective of the *komala-śraddha*. I also realized that so long as he maintained this theological perspective he would be incapable of performing modern critical research. The internal and subjective religious perspective of the *komala-śraddha* tends not to allow one to give credence to any material facts that do not support and nurture religious faith.

I too wondered how Bhaktivinode, a champion of Caitanya Vaishnavism, could go to such lengths and question so many traditional beliefs yet maintain a strong and abiding faith in the authority of the *Bhāgavata* and the Vedic tradition as a whole. Whereas so many of my respected colleagues were put on the spiritual defensive by even a small amount of such a discussion, the whole matter seemed straightforward to Bhaktivinode. In fact, on two separate occasions he encourages subsequent intellectuals to continue the study of Vedic history and geography using the *ādhunikā-vāda*.³¹

³⁰Ibid., 57-59.

³¹Ibid., 40: *hauka, bhaviṣyat sārāgrāhī paṇḍiterā e viṣaya adhikātara anu...āna-sahakāre sthira karite*

The reason why Bhaktivinode could afford to employ the *ādhunika-vāda* lay rooted in his theological perspective, a perspective that enabled him to differentiate between the various aspects of a religious tradition. Simply put, the perspective of the *sāragrāhī* views religion as having two constituent dimensions: one relating to this world and the other relating to transcendence. At the beginning of the *Upakramaṇikā*, Bhaktivinode writes:

Scripture is of two types, namely, that which relates to phenomenal matters (*artha-prada*) and that which relates to transcendent matters (*paramārtha-prada*). Geography, history, astrology, philosophy, psychology, medicine, entomology, mathematics, linguistics, prosody, music, logic, yoga, law, dentistry, architecture, and the military arts, and so on, are all sciences within the category of *artha-prada*. ... [On the other hand] that scripture which discusses the supreme goal of life is within the category of *paramārtha-prada*, or transcendence.³²

The religious equation therefore comprises two parts: one, the reality of this phenomenal/historical world, and the other, the reality of a transcendent world. According to Bhaktivinode, knowledge relating to this world, even if it is derived from scripture, can be subject to human analysis and logical scrutiny, whereas knowledge pertaining to transcendence is not subject to the logic and reasoning of this world. Responding to criticism from religious colleagues, Bhaktivinode states:

With folded hands I humbly submit to my respected readers, who hold traditional views, that where my analysis opposes their long held beliefs, they should understand that my conclusions have been made for persons possessing appropriate qualifications. What I have said about dharma applies to everyone, but with regard to matters which are

*pāribena/p. 61: bhaviṣyat paramārtha-vādī vā buddhimāna artha-vādīdigera nikaṭe haite aneka āśā
karā yāya/*

³²Ibid., 1: *śāstra dui-prakāra, arthāt artha-prada o paramārtha-prada/ bhūgola, itihāsa, jyotiṣa,
padārtha-vidyā, mānasa-vijñāna, āyur-veda, kṣudra-jīva-vivaraṇa, gaṇita, bhāṣā-vidyā, chanda-vidyā,
saṁgīta, tarka-śāstra, yoga-vidyā, dharma-śāstra, danta-vidhi, śilpa, astra-vidyā, prabhṛti samasta vidyāi
artha-prada śāstrera antargata/...ye śāstre ai parama phala prāptira ālocanā āche, tāhāra nāma
pāramārthika śāstra/*

secondary to dharma, my conclusions are meant to produce benefits in the form of intellectual clarification only for qualified specialists. All the subjects which I have outlined in the Introduction concerning time and history are based on the logical analysis of *śāstra*, and whether one accepts them or not does not affect the final spiritual conclusions. History and time are phenomenal subject matters (*artha-śāstra*) and when they are analyzed according to sound reasoning much good can be done for India.³³

Here Bhaktivinode answers the charge that the *ādhunika-vāda* must necessarily be incompatible with sacred tradition. In response he clearly states that matters which are secondary to dharma, and by this he means phenomenal knowledge, can be subject to human analysis. Knowledge relating to this world, even if it is derived from *śāstra*, can be subject to human scrutiny.

A graphic example of how a sacred text may be scrutinized by human reason is given by Bhaktivinode himself when he notes that a certain reading of the *Bhāgavata* is incorrect. In a particular text³⁴ of the *Bhāgavata* it is prophesied that the kings of the Kāṇva dynasty will rule the earth for 345 years. Through logical analysis in conjunction with other Puranic texts, Bhaktivinode concludes that the correct figure is 45 years and not 345 years, as the defective reading of the *Bhāgavata* states. Bhaktivinode even says that Śrīdhara Svāmī, the original commentator of the *Bhāgavata*, is mistaken in accepting the defective reading of 345 years.³⁵ A more traditional way to reconcile a discrepancy of this type may have been to find some way

³³KS, *Vijñāpana*, i-ii: *prācīna-kalpa pāṭhaka mahāśayadigera nikaṭe āmāra kritāñjali nivedana ei ye, sthāne sthāne tāñhādera cira-viśvāsa-virodhī kona siddhānta dekhile, tāñhārā tad-viśaya āpātaka ei sthira karibena ye, ai sakala siddhānta tat-tad-adhikārī jana-sambandhe kṛta haiyāche/ dharma-viśaye yāhā yāhā ukta haiyāche, tāhā sarvalokera grāhya/ ānuṣaṅgika vṛttānta-viśaye siddhānta-sakala kevala adhikārī janera jñāna-mārjjana-rūpa phalotpatti kare/ yukti-dvārā śāstra-mīmāṃsā-purvaka upakramaṇikāya aitihāsika ghaṭanā o kāla-sambandhe ye sakala viśaya kathita haiyāche, tārā viśvāsa vā aviśvāsa karile paramārthera lābha va hāni nāi/ itihāsa o kāla-jñāna– ihārā artha-śāstra-viśeṣa/ yukti-dvārā itihāsa o kālera vicāra bhāratara aneka upakāra haibe/*

³⁴*Bhāg.* 12/1/19: *kāṇvāyanā ime bhūmim catvāriṃśac ca pañca ca śatāni trīṇi bhokṣyanti varṣāṇām ca kalau yuge//*

³⁵KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, 41: *bhāgavatera pāṭha aśuddha thākā bodha haya/ durbhāgya-krame śrīdhara-svāmīo ai aśuddha pāṭha svikāra kariyāchena*

to show how the number of years given in the *Bhāgavata* is actually correct and not to state outright that the *Bhāgavata*'s text is corrupt or that the original commentator was in error. For Bhaktivinode, however, those parts of *śāstra* that are *artha-prada*, i.e. in relation to this world, are subject to human scrutiny.

In another example he points out how the *Bhāgavata* contains both phenomenal knowledge (*artha-prada*) and transcendent (*paramārtha-prada*) knowledge. During his descriptions of the heavens and hells in the *Bhāgavata* he writes:

The *Bhāgavata* certainly tells us of a state of reward and punishment in the future according to our deeds in the present situation. All poetic inventions [the various descriptions of heaven and hell], besides this spiritual fact, have been described as statements borrowed from other works in the way of preservation of old traditions in the book which superseded them and put an end to the necessity of their storage. If the whole stock of Hindu theological works which preceded the *Bhāgavata* were burnt like the Alexandrian library and the sacred *Bhāgavata* preserved as it is, not a part of the philosophy of the Hindus, except that of the atheistic sects, would be lost. The *Bhāgavata* therefore, may be styled both as a religious work and a compendium of all Hindu history and philosophy.³⁶

By contrast, however, those parts of *śāstra* that are strictly *paramārtha-prada* – in relation to transcendence – are not subject to rational analysis or human scrutiny of any kind. Bhaktivinode writes, “The objects of this world (*padārtha*) lie within the realm of human beings, but what is Divine is beyond human reasoning.”³⁷

Bhaktivinode is adamant in stating that the spiritual aspects of *śāstra* are not open to rational analysis. Again he writes, “According to our *śāstra*, analyses of fundamental principles of theology and mystic insights are not subject to revision.”³⁸ Such things cannot be approached through human reason, but only by the direct perception of

³⁶Thakur, *The Bhagavata*, 28-29.

³⁷ST, vol 7 (1895), *Tattva-sūtra* p. 186: *kona ekaṭī śabdera ullekha karilei tāhāra yadi kichu artha prakāśa haya tabe ai śabdake pada kahā yāya evaṁ padera lakṣita dravyake padārtha kahā yāya/ bhagavad-viśayaṭi yuktir atīta/*

³⁸KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, p. 62: *āmādera śāstra-mate kalpa-vicāra o yoga-vicāra e prakāra naya//* (Unfortunately Bhaktivinoda does not go on to explain *kalpa-vicāra* or *yoga-vicāra*).

the soul.³⁹

The subject matter of the *Upakramaṇikā*, which is mainly history and geography, is within the realm of phenomenal knowledge (*artha-śāstra*) in the form of data gleaned from the *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*. Therefore, it can legitimately be scrutinized by human reason. By contrast, what is *paramārtha* knowledge is not subject to human revision. This means that the fundamental spiritual truths of *śāstra* are not the subject of human speculation and interpretation. In accordance with this understanding, Bhaktivinode has, therefore, accepted two general categories of knowledge: temporal knowledge and eternal spiritual knowledge.

It is entirely possible that Bhaktivinode derived this idea, at least in part, from the influence of Unitarian Christianity that was prevalent in Bengal due to the efforts of Charles Dall. In his famous speech, “The Transient and Permanent in Christianity,”⁴⁰ The American Unitarian Theodore Parker (1810 – 1860) expresses an idea similar to Bhaktivinode when he states:

In actual Christianity – that is, in that portion of Christianity which is preached and believed – there seem to have been, ever since the time of its earthly founder, two elements, the one transient, the other permanent. The one is the thought, the folly, the uncertain wisdom, the theological notions, the impiety of man; the other, the eternal truth of God.⁴¹

In this way the temporal level of scripture serves as the carrier for the spiritual level, just as a jewel is placed within a particular setting. In a similar way the spiritual essence of the *Purāṇas* has been placed within a particular temporal setting, namely, the Puranic narratives. This is the reason why Bhaktivinode can afford to take some

³⁹Thakur Bhaktivinode, *Datta-kaustubha* (Mayapur, The Gaudiya Mission, 1942), vs. 10: *svaṁ paraṁ dvi-vidhaṁ proktaṁ pratyakṣaṁ cendriyātmano-/ anumānaṁ dvidhā tadvat pramāṇaṁ dvi-vidhaṁ matam*// (Direct perception may be performed either by the material senses or the spirit soul directly.)

⁴⁰Theodore Parker's essay, “The Transient and Permanent in Christianity” was delivered in Boston in 1841.

⁴¹Conrad Wright, *Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism: Channing Emerson Parker* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1980), 118. Theodore Parker's essay, “The Transient and Permanent in Christianity” was delivered in Boston in 1841.

liberty in terms of the historical interpretation of the *Purāṇas* and other *śāstras*. Bhaktivinode's *ādhunika-vāda* simply becomes another setting for the eternal spiritual truths of the *Purāṇas*,⁴² and, as we have seen, he freely admits that if someone can document a better interpretation, he will accept it.⁴³ This could even include the more traditional or literal interpretations of Puranic history.

Bhaktivinode's assertion that matters secondary to dharma need have no effect on the understanding of eternal truth was a challenging new concept. His separation of *śāstric* knowledge into constituent phenomenal and transcendent components had profound ramifications. Inevitably such an approach was perceived as threatening to much of Hindu orthodoxy. His free use of the *ādhunika-vāda* opened new doors to *śāstric* understanding that admittedly resulted in many independent conclusions,⁴⁴ but at the same time prepared the way for comparative and historical religious scholarship – in the spirit of Orientalism – by the religious insider.

The *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* is, therefore, as much a statement about the relationship between reason and religious faith as it is a study of the life of Sri Krishna and a summary of India's religious history. It is Bhaktivinode's unique blend of these components that gives his synthesis of modernity and tradition its extraordinary utility even today, perhaps also beyond the realm of Caitanya Vaishnavism.

The extent to which Bhaktivinode approaches the level of modern scholarship in religion can be appreciated when we compare his work with that of Wilfred Cantwell Smith, who points out that one of the greatest stumbling blocks to the study of religion, for both the religious insider and the outsider, is the very concept of religion itself. Smith suggests that historically “religion” is a vague and misleading term.⁴⁵ To the insider, religion primarily denotes religious faith, but to the outsider it denotes

⁴²This could also be extended to include empirical history as a carrier or medium of spiritual knowledge. In other words, both conservative and liberal interpretations of *śāstra* may be carriers or mediators of transcendent meaning.

⁴³KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, 61: *yata-dūra pāṛā gela, ghaṭanā-sakalera o grantha-sakalera ādhunika-mate kāla nirupita haila/ sāragrāhī janagaṇa vāda-niṣṭha nahena, ataeva sad-yukti dvārā ihāra viparīta kona viśaya sthira haileo tāhā āmādera ādaraṇīya/ ataeva etat-siddhānta-sambandhe bhaviṣyat paramārthavādī vā buddhimāna artha-vādīdigera nikṣa haite aneka āśā karā yāya/*

⁴⁴KS, *Vijñāpana*, ii: *Upakramaṇikāra svādhīna siddhānta dekhīyā...*

⁴⁵For a detailed discussion on this point see Wilfred Cantwell Smith's *The Meaning and End of Religion*.

the hard data of a tradition.⁴⁶ Smith proposes therefore that we conceive of religion through two complementary categories, one the historical cumulative tradition and the other the personal faith of the individuals who take part in that tradition. Both tradition and faith exist in their own right, and together they form what we call religion.

This, in many ways, is similar to the distinction that Bhaktivinode makes throughout his writings. What Bhaktivinode calls *artha-prada* – the phenomenal side of a religious tradition – is nothing less than the cumulative religious tradition. What he calls *paramārtha-prada* – the transcendent side of religion, although not directly faith as Smith describes it – is an experiential reality that must be approached through religious faith. What Smith calls religious faith ultimately leads to what Bhaktivinode terms *sahaja-samādhi*⁴⁷ or a state of innate spiritual insight or intuition. For Bhaktivinode pure religious faith is the means by which an inner awareness of spiritual reality arises, and when that inner spiritual reality is expressed in physical terms, the cumulative religious traditions of the world arise.

Perhaps the most important feature of the cumulative tradition, as Bhaktivinode would readily agree, is that the cumulative religious tradition lies within the realm of empirical history accessible to the rational mind and therefore can be the object of logic and comparative study.

In this context there is significant value in making the distinction between what lies within the realm of empirical observation and reasoning and what lies beyond that realm because it allows the religious insider to differentiate between the two worlds, or two dimensions of reality. This allows him to treat each area separately and thus keep the door open, so to speak, for higher perceptions.

Bhaktivinode felt that what was phenomenal could be the object of logical scrutiny, but what transcended logic could only be approached by another means: innate spiritual intuition (*sahaja-samādhi*). According to him the basis behind a

⁴⁶Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: The New American Library, 1964), 141.

⁴⁷I have chosen to translate *sahaja-samādhi* as innate spiritual insight but perhaps a more literal rendering would be “natural intuition”. Bhaktivinode himself never gives an English translation for this term, but he does describe it as a natural function of the soul that everyone potentially may have access to. *Sahaja-samādhi* is a state of cognition that is totally free of any kind of rational or conceptual processes (*vikalpa*). Elsewhere he describes it as *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. See KS, *Saṁhitā* 9/2e.

religious experience is a transcending reality that exists far beyond the reasoning ability of human beings, but which, none the less, is not totally cut off from human experience. That reality can be approached to a certain extent by human reason, but ultimately the only means of approach is to employ the innate “seeing” ability of the soul, called *sahaja-samādhī*. Religious faith, unfettered by rational processes, is the key to unlock that ability. *Sahaja-samādhī* is the soul's natural faculty which everyone possesses, except that in most people the ability has been diminished due to occlusion by the rational mind. Religious mystics and saints are individuals who have reawakened this natural seeing ability of the soul and we, like the religious mystic, are invited to reactivate that natural talent that lies within. Bhaktivinode's discussion about *sahaja-samādhī* is a fascinating topic and one that is reminiscent of the nineteenth century American Transcendentalists' and Unitarians' ideas of natural intuition. We will discuss this in another article. Before we proceed, however, we need to complete one final topic, namely, the distinction between faith and belief that results from Bhaktivinode's division of religion into two constituent parts.

Faith and Belief

Perhaps the most important benefit that can be derived from making the differentiation between the phenomenal and the transcendent is the distinction that can be made between faith and belief.⁴⁸ Returning to our previous discussion about the date of the *Bhāgavata*, the reaction of my audience, who became upset on hearing my summary of Bhaktivinode's historical conclusions, was natural for those whose faith is rigidly tied to their belief system. There is little doubt that the relationship between religious faith and belief that Bhaktivinode experienced was radically different from what many in my audience experienced. The latter experienced faith

⁴⁸W. C. Smith points out that many people, especially in the West, equate religious faith with belief because in Christianity the two have been made inseparable. Church theology, expressed in terms of doctrinal belief, is often set forth as a formal qualification for church membership. Smith writes: “Doctrine has been a central expression of faith, has seemed often a criterion of it; the community has divided over differences in belief, and has set forth belief as a formal qualification of membership.” (*Faith and Belief*, p. 13) The faithful have been distinguished by what doctrines they believe. Belief has even been translated into salvation— that all one has to do is believe certain creeds in order to obtain salvation. There is little doubt that in the West with its long history of Church influence, faith and belief have been made synonymous or at least so tightly intertwined as to be indistinguishable.

in terms of their belief systems, considering faith and belief as virtually the same thing, and felt that faith was inseparable from certain historical conceptions. Therefore, to tinker with one's belief system or revise one's view of history was to tinker with the foundations of religious faith itself. Bhaktivinode, however, made a significant distinction between his religious faith and his belief.

When the person of religious faith becomes aware of the distinction between belief and faith, fully understanding that beliefs are a part of the cumulative (and changing) religious tradition and not equivalent to faith, he is then able to relax intellectually and spiritually, so to speak, and take a critical look at the religious tradition from a perspective that is not tied to vested intellectual and emotional interests. In other words, religious faith becomes somewhat insulated from changes that may occur in the belief system as a result of critical research. This is the reason why Bhaktivinode could afford to make his presentation of Vedic history according to the *ādhunika-vāda* or modern approach. His conclusion that the *Bhāgavata* may be a work of only a 1000 years, for example, had no effect on his faith in the spiritual truths of that great work. Regardless of the *Bhāgavata's* historicity, it remains an authoritative spiritual text. Bhaktivinode clearly points out that the value of the *Bhāgavata* is in its expression of eternal spiritual principles⁴⁹: in its capacity to elicit a response of faith, and not in who wrote it or when it was written. The spiritual truths which it embodies are its real value.⁵⁰

For Bhaktivinode, faith is a living quality of the soul and therefore faith in God is a natural condition of life.⁵¹ Belief, on the other hand, is primarily a mental act that involves the holding of certain ideas in the mind. Belief is an expression of faith just as religious architecture and dance can be expressions of faith. Belief, therefore, is a

⁴⁹KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, 56: *vāstavika śrīmad-bhāgavata-grantha ādhunika naya, vedera nyāya nitya o prācīna. ... p. 57: kintu ādhunika paṇḍitadigera mate kona samaye kona deśe o kona mahātmāra caityane ai grantharājera prathama udaya haya, tāhā nirūpaṇa karā atīva vāñjanīya/*

⁵⁰The distinction between religious faith and belief can also be shown to exist outside the religious field. In philosophy, for example, it is not what a philosopher believes that makes him a philosopher, but rather the individual's faith in philosophy, out of which the beliefs, the particular philosophies, are produced and sustained. The same can be said about science. A person is a scientist because of his faith in science, in the spirit of science, and not because of his beliefs in the particular theorems, which unquestionably come and go.

⁵¹Bhaktivinode, *Tattva-viveka*, *Tattva-sūtra*, *Āmnāya-sūtra*, trans. Narasimha Brahmachari (Madras: Sree Gaudiya Math, 1979), 18.

part of the cumulative religious tradition. It is *artha-prada* and, like all aspects of the cumulative tradition, it has the capacity to induce and nurture faith. And because belief is part of the cumulative tradition, it is also the object of reason and logic by which it can be inspected, shaped, and molded. This explains why beliefs change so often and why those who fail to make the distinction between faith and belief may experience a crisis of faith when their beliefs are challenged.

In his *Upakramaṇikā*, Bhaktivinode could afford to show empirically how the Vedic historical and literary traditions may have developed because he knew that whatever he might believe about that development and however his beliefs may change as a result of his research, would not necessarily affect his confidence in the spiritual essence of the Vedic/Vaishnava tradition. History and time are simply various aspects of the cumulative religious tradition.⁵² Bhaktivinode is able to conclude his critical assessment of Indian history by honestly saying that he has done his best and that future historians should attempt to do better. He writes:

As far as possible, I have determined the chronology of the major events and important books according to the modern perspective. A *sāragrāhī*, however, is not attached to a particular view, so if, in the future, any of my conclusions are refuted by better reasoning, then those new conclusions are worthy of my respect and consideration. Indeed, there is much hope that future spiritual seekers and intellectuals will improve upon this matter.⁵³

Since Bhaktivinode makes the subtle but important distinction between the cumulative tradition and faith, he is able to keep the door open for continued empirical study of the cumulative tradition. The distinction he draws between the two, along with the separation of faith and belief, is basic to much of modern critical scholarship in religious theology. Moreover, it is not unlikely that Bhaktivinode derived his ideas, at least in part, from Theodore Parker, whom we have noted earlier. Parker makes a similar distinction between faith and belief in his sermon, “The Transient and Permanent in Christianity.” Speaking of one who builds his faith solely upon human beliefs, Parker writes, “You will be afraid of every new opinion, lest it shake down your church; you will fear ‘lest if a fox go up, he will break down your

⁵²KS, *Vijñāpana*, p. i.

⁵³KS, *Upakramaṇikā*, 61.

stone wall.' The smallest contradiction in the New Testament or Old Testament; the least disagreement between the Law and the Gospel; any mistake of the Apostles, will weaken your faith."⁵⁴

⁵⁴Conrad Wright, *Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism: Channing Emerson Parker* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1980), 147 Theodore Parker's essay, "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity" was delivered in Boston in 1841.

Notes from the Madhurya Kadambini **from the** **Second Shower of Nectar.**

Obstacles to the development of deeper faith

There are 2 symptoms which begin to manifest as one has begun on the path of devotional service. The first is klesaghni (relief from all kinds of material distress) and the second is called subhada(beginning of all auspiciousness).

There are 5 types of klesa which are destroyed by bhakti :

Avidya – ignorance; to falsely identify with or not to have the proper understanding or awareness of a situation.

Asmita – false ego; to identify with the body or only to accept things which can be experienced on the gross level.

Raga – attachment; the desire for material happiness and less suffering.

Dvesa – hatred; aversion to unhappiness or the causes of unhappiness.

Abhinivesa – one who is attached to sense enjoyment and is afraid that death will take it away.

From these arise the tendency for right or wrong actions, causing religion or irreligion, and thus sinful and pious activities.

Bhakti eradicates klesa and simultaneously bestows subdha or auspiciousness which consists of such qualities as disinterest in material affairs, interest in the Supreme Lord, friendliness, mercy, forgiveness, truthfulness, simplicity, equanimity, fortitude, gravity, respectfulness, humility and being pleasing to all. There is a difference in the rate at which the undesirable qualities disappear and the auspicious qualities appear.

Bhakti develops gradually in specific stages. The first stage is called sraddha(faith) which is to have firm trust in scripture or to be enthusiastic to follow the activities of scripture(sadhana).

Faith may be of 2 types : svabhaviki – spontaneous

Baladutpadita – aroused by forceful preaching

Faith then leads one to a spiritual master. By following the instructions of the guru one obtains association of realized devotees.(sadhu-sanga).

Next comes bhajana-kriya in which different types of devotional activities are practiced.

This has 2 categories : anisthita – unsteady

Nisthita – steady

Unsteady devotional service progresses in 6 stages :

Utsaha – mayi : false confidence or one may be puffed up with enthusiasm.

Ghana – tarala : Sporadic endeavour; being sometimes diligent and other times negligent.

Vyudha – vikalpa : indecision(extensive speculation); the mind spends time pondering on whether to renounce or take to household life.

Visaya – sangara : struggle with the senses or the inability to give up sense enjoyment.

Niyamaksama : inability to uphold vows which results in the inability to improve in ones devotional service.

Taranga – rangini : enjoying the facilities offered by bhakti i.e material gain ,worship,and position.These are weeds around the creeper of bhakti.Seeking pleasure (ranga) in the weed like facilities which are small waves (taranga) in the ocean of bhakti.